

MARCH 2015

EMPIRE



200

MOVIES TO WATCH IN 2015

007
SPECTRE

MAD MAX:
FURY ROAD

ANT-MAN

FURIOUS 7

MOCKINGJAY
— PART 2

STAR WARS:
THE FORCE
AWAKENS

JURASSIC
WORLD

TERMINATOR
GENISYS

AVENGERS:
AGE OF
ULTRON

WYRMWOOD:
ROAD OF THE
DEAD



KINGSMAN:
THE SECRET SERVICE

EX
MACHINA

BLACKHAT

CHAPPIE

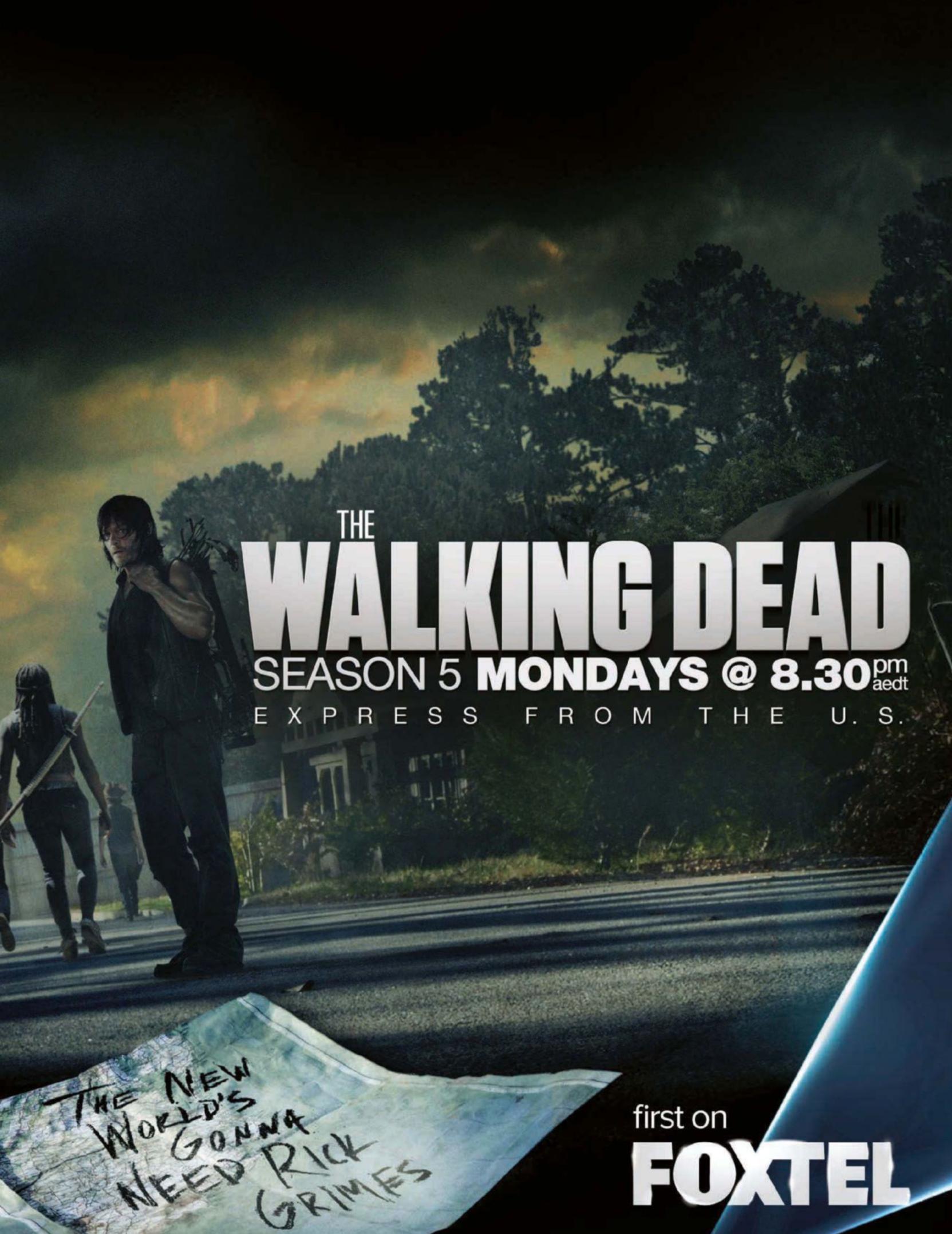
MARGOT ROBBIE
TALKS FOCUS

& 185 MORE!

FX
CHANNEL 119



JOIN IN THE CONVERSATION
f **o** **t** /FXTVAU



THE WALKING DEAD

SEASON 5 **MONDAYS @ 8.30pm**
aedt

EXPRESS FROM THE U.S.

THE NEW
WORLD'S
GOING TO
NEED RICK
GRIMES

first on
FOXTEL

CONTENTS

200
MOVIES TO WATCH
IN 2015

MARCH 2015

41

2015 PREVIEW

The most important double century in film. At least til they make *Ricky Ponting: How I Done It*. Also includes...

42

KINGSMAN: THE SECRET SERVICE

The story of cheeky mechanic Al Kingsman, who tunes up your car without telling you.

50

CRIMSON PEAK

Guillermo Del Toro heads back to Horrorville, plus other grotesqueries: Frankenstein! Ant-Man! Bigfoot!

52

EX MACHINA

The non-artificial intelligence behind Alex Garland's she-robot psycho thriller. Or: *This Lady's Not For Turing...*

62

TRASH

Stephen Daldry's latest is a great big load of rubbish. But in a very good way.

66

CHAPPIE

More intelligent artificial intelligence. And no, we don't mean Die Antwoord.

73

IN THE HEART OF THE SEA

Chris Hemsworth gets that sinking feeling in Ron Howard's aquatic thriller, while Mila Kunis ascends.

74

THE MAN FROM U.N.C.L.E.

Where the American plays the Russian and the Pom goes Yank. As for which one reps your mother's brother, who knows?

76

BLACKHAT

Chris Hemsworth has probably less fun sitting at a computer in Michael Mann's hacktastic drama-thriller.

84

WYRMWOOD: ROAD OF THE DEAD

Two Australian brothers make a zombie movie. No they are not named Spierig.

86

MARGOT ROBBIE

From Ramsay Street to Wall Street to the end of the world. Meet Ms. Robbie.

90

STAR WARS: THE FORCE AWAKENS

Because if we say it out loud enough and often enough it will become reality. Like this!



2015 Preview amazingness,
starring Daisy Ridley riding
J.J.'s 'Magnum' opus... (p.90)

LUCAS TILL STEPHEN McHATTIE JOHN PYPER-FERGUSON MERRITT PATTERSON AND JASON MOMOA

WOLVES
UNLEASH THE BEAST
FROM THE WRITER OF X-MEN AND WATCHMEN

PINNACLE FILMS

UNLEASH THE BEAST ON
FEBRUARY 4

DVD
Blu-ray Disc
JB HI-FI
VIDEO EZY
CIVIC
iTunes
BIG POND MOVIES
XBOX ONE
Google play
FOXTEL Store

D
DIGITAL DOWNLOAD
iTunes
BIG POND MOVIES
XBOX ONE
Google play
FOXTEL Store

A FILM BY MACK LINDON

RISE
A TRUE STORY
IT'S NOT HOW MANY TIMES YOU FALL...

PINNACLE FILMS

FIGHT FOR FREEDOM ON
FEBRUARY 4

DVD
Blu-ray Disc
JB HI-FI
VIDEO EZY
CIVIC
iTunes
BIG POND MOVIES
XBOX ONE
Google play
FOXTEL Store

D
DIGITAL DOWNLOAD
iTunes
BIG POND MOVIES
XBOX ONE
Google play
FOXTEL Store

ACADEMY AWARD® WINNER
HELEN HUNT
ACADEMY AWARD® NOMINEE
SAMANTHA MORTON
GOLDEN GLOBE® NOMINEE
AARON PAUL
ALICE EVE
RASHIDA JONES
MARLEY SHELTON

DECODING ANNIE PARKER
BASED ON AN INCREDIBLE TRUE STORY

PINNACLE FILMS

CHANGE THE WORLD ON
FEBRUARY 18

DVD
Blu-ray Disc
JB HI-FI
VIDEO EZY
CIVIC
iTunes
BIG POND MOVIES
XBOX ONE
Google play
FOXTEL Store

D
DIGITAL DOWNLOAD
iTunes
BIG POND MOVIES
XBOX ONE
Google play
FOXTEL Store

NIGHT MOVES
A FILM BY KELLY REICHARDT
“A RIVETING THRILLER.” - INDIEWIRE

CURIOUS

PARANOIA TAKES HOLD ON
FEBRUARY 18

DVD
Blu-ray Disc
JB HI-FI
VIDEO EZY
CIVIC
iTunes
BIG POND MOVIES
XBOX ONE
Google play
FOXTEL Store

D
DIGITAL DOWNLOAD
iTunes
BIG POND MOVIES
XBOX ONE
Google play
FOXTEL Store

CONTENTS



REGULARS

10

SHORTS

Where you lot download thoughts from your mind grapes and then send the burnished golden nuggets... to us!

12

ON LOCATION

Rock-quake drama *San Andreas* and Troubled Irish thriller, '71.

16

THE SLATE

The new Bond has a plus size tux, *50 Shades Of Grey*, *Ghostbusters* reimagined and the movie that might end the world.

26

THE GRILL

When it comes to barbequeing, Liam Neeson always uses a particular set of grills.

Watch **EMPIRE**
COME TO LIFE!

THIS MONTH'S INTERACTIVE CONTENT

12 **SAN ANDREAS** TRAILER
Smash!

18 **50 SHADES** TRAILER
NSFW.

20 **SPY** TRAILER
Melissa McCarthy goes 00.

30 **IN CINEMAS**
Trailers and clips plus rate all the latest movies!

68 **CHAPPIE**
The new trailer and, on page 68, Neil Blomkamp talks Die Antwoord!

73 **IN THE HEART OF THE SEA**
Hemsworth goes to sea.

79 **BLACKHAT**
Hemsworth goes to the internet kiosk.

84 **WYRMWOOD: ROAD OF THE DEAD**
Aussie zombies run amok in exclusive BTS clips.

91 **STAR WARS: THE FORCE AWAKENS** TRAILER
Just because.

94 **BOYHOOD** BTS
Inside the best film of 2014.

97 **WOLVES** TRAILER
Totally bites.

113 **CAPTION COMP**
Win big!

The Interview's James Franco and Seth Rogen hit the sack while their bosses get hacked. (p.22)

IN CINEMAS

30 **BLACK SEA** ★★★★★

32 **WYRMWOOD: ROAD OF THE DEAD**

★★★★★

THE GAMBLER ★★★★★

33 **KINGSMAN: THE SECRET SERVICE**

★★★★★

34 **THAT SUGAR FILM** ★★★★★

THE INTERVIEW ★★★★★

35 **A MOST VIOLENT YEAR** ★★★★★

36 **SELMA** ★★★★★

37 **ROSEWATER** ★★★★★

THE WEDDING RINGER ★★★★★

WHAT WE DID ON OUR HOLIDAY

★★★★★

CITIZENFOUR ★★★★★

93

PLAY

Boyhood. *Wolves*. *Whiplash*. You know, the usual.

105

MASTERMIND

The casual auteur, Richard Linklater, trips down memory lane.

106

MASTERPIECE

Red River — the movie where The Duke goes full baddie. And wears a cool hat.

112

GIVEAWAYS

Win a Tardis onesie! Yes, our excitement is very sad.

114

CLASSIC SCENE

The Man Who Would Be King, which proves that Mr. Kipling certainly spun exceedingly good yarns.

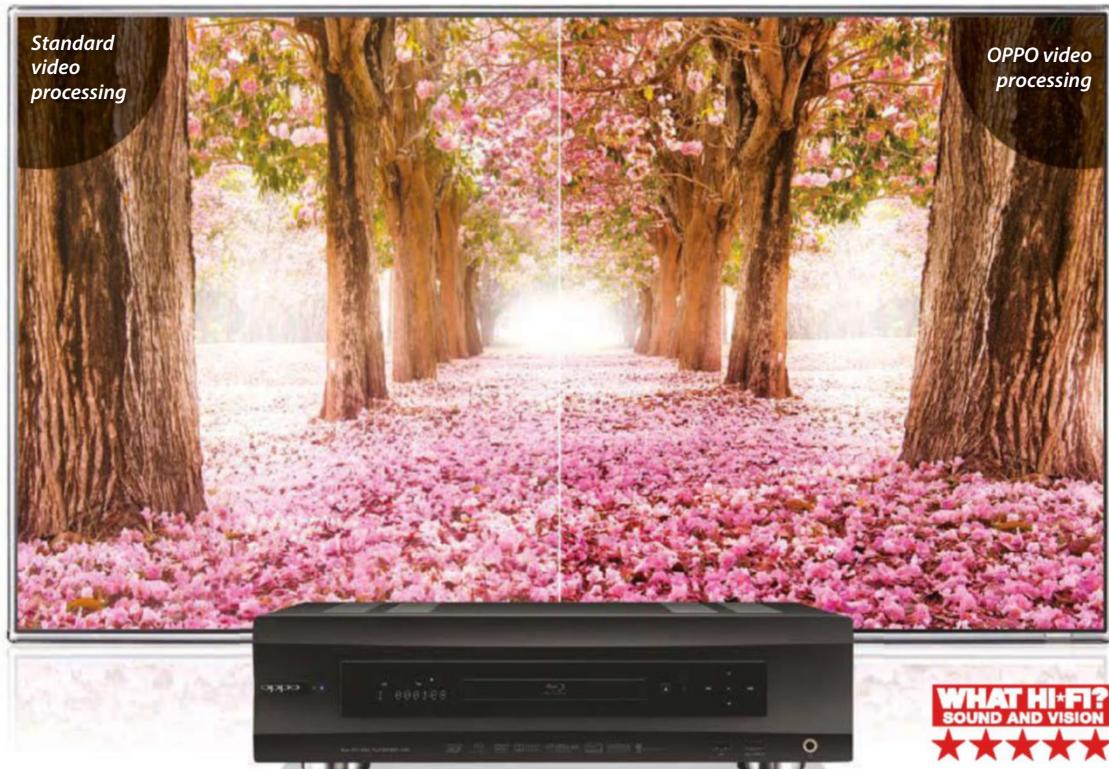


1 Where you see this icon, tap to watch, trailers, exclusive clips and more!



2 Tap this icon to receive special offers, enter competitions or launch special features.

THE CENTRE OF YOUR HOME ENTERTAINMENT UNIVERSE.



One that brings your Blu-ray and DVD movies to life with crisp, mouth-watering detail so immersive that you'll feel like you're on set. One that reproduces your CDs exactly as they were intended to be heard. One that connects effortlessly to popular streaming services like Netflix and Quickflix, as well as any media stored on your home network. One that can be controlled at the click of a finger using an intuitive app. One that's earned more awards and positive reviews than any other competing universal player. One that's designed for humans, and engineered to last.

Just promise us one thing. Don't set up your next home theatre without auditioning an OPPO.

AUDITION OPPO AT THESE PREMIUM RETAILERS

Frankston HiFi Melbourne • Audio Trends Melbourne • Addicted to Audio Melbourne
Trevor Lees Audio Melbourne • Stereophonic Melbourne • Len Wallis Audio Sydney
Pacific HiFi Sydney • Apollo HiFi Sydney • Digital Cinema Sydney • The Audio Tailor Brisbane
Trimira Audio Brisbane • Denis White Adelaide • Surround Sounds Perth • North Coast Stereo Darwin

OPPO

For more retailers, visit
oppodigital.com.au

EMPIRE

CREDITS

THE PITCH

IF THERE'S ONE MAGAZINE YOU BUY THIS YEAR IT'S THIS ONE: THE COPY OF EMPIRE

featuring The Big Preview Enormo-List. Over the last few years we've been cute with our execution of TBPE-L — staggering the list over a few issues, publishing 20 or so in the mag, then the rest on *viewa* in a bid to prompt you guys to download the app onto your smartphones (loads of you have now, which is fantabulous), and generally screwing around with the formula to, you know, keep it interesting for us and, hopefully, you (but mainly us).

As many reminded us with each imaginative indiscretion, that shit is bush league. And so, yea and verily, here it is. Every damn movie we could think of coming out after January this year. Well, every damn movie we could think of that made 200 movies. It starts properly on page 41, but in reality, we are previewing movies from page 12 (Dwayne Johnson's *San Andreas* — on set, naturally).

This list is the broad canvas of an answer to questions that the *Empire* team are often asked: "Seen any good movies lately?" or "What movie are you fully pumped for?" and such and such. What's that? What 10 movies am I really looking forward to in 2015, and why? Well... [drumroll]

MURPHY'S FROTHIN' 10 FOR 2015

- 10 *Avengers: Age Of Ultron* (page 50): Joss Whedon's smartypants dialogue.
- 9 *Chappie* (page 66): Neill Blomkamp is gonna make me cry for a CGI robot.
- 8 *The Hateful Eight* (page 81): It's Quentin, man!
- 7 *Pitch Perfect 2* (page 83): Just shut up, *PP* is frickin' rad.
- 6 *Macbeth* (page 90): *Snowtown*'s Justin Kurzel directs Fassbender and Cotillard.
- 5 *The Martian* (page 59): Ridley Scott strands Matt Damon on Mars.
- 4 *Spectre* (page 50): Mendes. Craig. Bond.
- 3 *Inherent Vice* (page 49): Actually, I've seen P.T. Anderson's newie. It's brilliant.
- 2 *Mad Max: Fury Road* (page 47): See the ed's letter in issue 167.
- 1 See page 90, although you won't need to use the Force to guess.

Enjoy the preview and let us know what we missed.

We know you will, you magnificent creatures.

Bring it.



Daniel Murphy
Editor

"It's ironic that shooting beautiful footage of men's **abdominal muscles** enabled me to make a horrible, evil-looking zombie film."

p.85

"He's got a **terrible skin condition** from any number of battles with whalers, squids and other whales."

p.73

"I hadn't finished telling the story. And I feel, immodestly, I am the **best person** to tell it."

p.50

**CLASSIC LINES
OF THE MONTH**

SUBSCRIBE  WWW.MAGSHOP.COM.AU/EMPIRE //  136 116

EMPIRE

(...and the movie we are most looking forward to in 2015 that isn't *Star Wars*)

EDITORIAL

EDITOR DANIEL MURPHY 02 8268 4621
(*Mad Max: Fury Road*)

SENIOR EDITOR DAVID MICHAEL BROWN 02 8114 9495
(*Mad Max: Fury Road*)

REVIEWS EDITOR JAMES JENNINGS 02 8116 9310
(*Mad Max: Fury Road*)

ART DIRECTOR CRAIG CARROLL 02 8114 9433
(*Mad Max: Fury Road*)

PHOTO EDITOR LEWIS ASTRIDGE 02 8114 9444
(*Magic Mike XXL*)

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS ED GIBBS, BENNETT RING

CONTRIBUTORS Michael Adams, Elizabeth Best, John Catania, Simon Crook, Nick De Semlyen, James Dyer, Angie Errigo, James Evans, David Hughes, Dan Jolin, Ben McEachen, Jim Mitchell, Anthony Morris, Matt Mueller, Ian Nathan, Kim Newman, Helen O'Hara, Blair Pagan, David Parkinson, Nev Pierce, Ali Plumb, Olly Richards, James White, Owen Williams, Damon Wise

ADVERTISING

BRAND MANAGER, MEN'S LIFESTYLE AARON MORTON 02 9263 9744

SOUTH AUSTRALIAN ADVERTISING NABULA EL MOURID 08 8267 5032

QUEENSLAND ADVERTISING JO MARONEY 07 3101 6502

WEST AUSTRALIAN ADVERTISING VIKKI STACY 08 9449 9908

SALES DIRECTOR, NSW JO CLASBY

SALES DIRECTOR, VICTORIA ANDREA SALMON

GROUP MANAGER, BRAND ADVERTISING STRATEGY SIMON DAVIES

DIRECTOR OF SALES TONY KENDALL

MARKETING AND CIRCULATION

MARKETING DIRECTOR MATTHEW DOMINELLO 02 9282 8915

MARKETING GENERAL MANAGER NATALIE BETTINI 02 9282 8442

BRAND MANAGER KIMBERLY OMODEI 02 9282 8038

CIRCULATION MANAGER CHARLOTTE GRAY 02 8268 4620

GROUP CIRCULATION MANAGER, MEN'S & SPECIALIST PAUL WEAVING

RESEARCH DIRECTOR JUSTIN STONE 02 9282 8283

PRODUCTION

PRODUCTION CONTROLLER IAN HENN 02 9282 8333

PRODUCTION CO-ORDINATOR DOMINIC ROY 02 9282 8691

GENERAL MANAGER PREPRESS JAMES HAWKES

VIEWA CAMPAIGN MANAGER MELODY LI

EMPIRE UK

EXECUTIVE EDITOR IAN NATHAN

ASSISTANT EDITOR IAN FREER

ASSOCIATE EDITOR LIZ BEARDSWORTH

INTERNATIONAL DIRECTOR SIMON GREVES

BAUER MEDIA

PUBLISHER JO RUNCIMAN

PUBLISHER CORNELIA SCHULZE

CEO DAVID GOODCHILD

Empire is published in Australia by Bauer Media Action Sports Pty Limited, part of the Bauer Media Group, ACN 079 430 023, 54-58 Park Street, Sydney, New South Wales, 2000. © 2013, under licence from Bauer Consumer Media Limited. All rights reserved. The trade mark "Empire" and certain material contained herein are owned by Bauer Consumer Media. Printed by PMP Print, 31-35 Heathcote Road, Moorebank, NSW 2170, (02) 9828 1350. Distributed by Network Services, 54-58 Park Street, Sydney, NSW 2000. *Empire* accepts no responsibility for loss of or damage to unsolicited contributions.

PRIVACY NOTICE This issue of *Empire* is published by Bauer Media Pty Ltd (Bauer). Bauer may use and disclose your information in accordance with our Privacy Policy, including to provide you with your requested products or services and to keep you informed of other Bauer publications, products, services and events. Our Privacy Policy is located at www.bauer-media.com.au/privacy/. It also sets out on how you can access or correct your personal information and lodge a complaint. Bauer may disclose your personal information offshore to its owners, joint venture partners, service providers and agents located throughout the world, including in New Zealand, USA, the Philippines and the European Union.

In addition, this issue may contain Reader Offers, being offers, competitions or surveys. Reader Offers may require you to provide personal information to enter or to take part. Personal information collected for Reader Offers may be disclosed by us to service providers assisting Bauer in the conduct of the Reader Offer and to other organisations providing special prizes or offers that are part of the Reader Offer. An opt-out choice is provided with a Reader Offer. Unless you exercise that opt-out choice, personal information collected for Reader Offers may also be disclosed by us to other organisations for use by them to inform you about other products, services or events or to give to other organisations that may use this information for this purpose.

If you require further information, please contact Bauer's Privacy Officer either by email at privacyofficer@bauer-media.com.au or mail at Privacy Officer, Bauer Media Pty Ltd, 54 Park Street, Sydney NSW 2000.



CULT
FILM
CLASSICS

IN THE HOUSE



\$10 Tickets*
\$9 CINEBUZZ*

*\$1.10 booking fee

**TERMINATOR 2:
JUDGEMENT DAY**
6th February, 7pm

**THE ROCKY HORROR
PICTURE SHOW**
20th February, 7pm

**4K TAXI
DRIVER**
6th March, 7pm

**LITTLE SHOP
OF HORRORS**
20th March, 7pm

THE PRINCESS BRIDE
3rd April, 7pm

BLADE RUNNER
17th April, 7pm

MAD MAX 2
1st May, 7pm

**UNIVISION
THE FIFTH
ELEMENT**
15th May, 7pm

EVENT
KINGSTON STREET
eventcinemas.com.au

set
bar

supanova
pop culture expo

Design & Illustration by Richard de Carvalho.

FILL IN THE ENTRY FORM TO GO IN THE RUNNING TO WIN 3 MONTHS OF FREE MOVIES**
BOOK NOW AT EVENTCINEMAS.COM.AU

**double pass every fortnight for 3 months

SHORTS

— YOU TALKIN' TO US —



LETTER OF THE MONTH

THE HOBBIT: MISSED

→ Thanks for another brilliant edition (#166). Not only was it a *Hobbit* issue, but to have the wizard himself, Peter Jackson, be the guest editor was amazing! I have loved this epic journey from *The Fellowship Of The Ring* to *The Battle Of The Five Armies*, but I have really loved the excitement of seeing what was on the cover when one of the films were covered. From #10 in 2002 to #166, 14 covers in all! Thanks for taking us on this journey. Surely we can get one more cover when Mr. Jackson agrees to do *The Silmarillion*?

Shaun Rushby, via email

We'd say Pete's likely taking a long holiday...



EVERY letter printed this month receives a Blu-ray of Liam Neeson playing hard arse Private Investigator Matt Scudder in gritty crime noir *A Walk Among The Tombstones*. There will be bone crackage.

HAVE YOUR SAY:

Tweet Us!

Reading the Peter Jackson Empire when I see the puppets in his office. A PJ Thunderbirds movie would be epic!

Matt Scanlan

@mjscanners



SPINE QUOTE HONOUR ROLL

#167

"Do I look like Mother Teresa to you?"

THE FILM: *Chopper* (2000)

THE CONNECTION: Said by Eric Bana who starred with cover *Mad Max: Fury Road* cover star Tom Hardy in *Black Hawk Down*.

THE WINNER: *Shane Reid, via email*

THE REWARD: An Empire cap for you!

Send answers to
empire@bauer-media.com.au



EMPIRE MAGAZINE, LEVEL 9, 54 PARK STREET, SYDNEY, NSW 2000



BUCKAROO BANZAI FAN: "BUCKAROO AIN'T A REAL PERSON!"

→ Thanks for the wonderful *Buckaroo Banzai* article (*Empire* #167). It was such a big surprise and is one of my all-time favourite "odd" films. It was released with a disappointing DVD commentary in which director W.D. Richter pretended the movie was a documentary about a real person. It was great to finally get some true reflections on the making of the crazy film, from those who made it. And best of all, I finally found out what that watermelon was all about! Keep the surprises coming!

Andrew Gilchrist, Melbourne, VIC

Glad you enjoyed the feature Andrew, we sure enjoyed writing it! Stating that the events in Buckaroo (an alien invasion by Red Lectroids from Planet 10, etc) never happened, however, is a serious allegation. We contacted director W.D. Richter for a response...

BUCKAROO BANZAI DIRECTOR: "DAMN STRAIGHT BUCKAROO IS A REAL PERSON!"

→ I don't play Pretend and, furthermore, don't see why I should believe Mr. Andrew Gilchrist himself is a real person. For all I know, the notorious Mrs. Merrill Fuapau or even the sly Willodean Ashly (her again!) could be the person behind this name. I might also point out the difference between a "documentary" and a "docudrama" to this alleged "Gilchrist" person, and tell "him" for me that "he" knows what I look like and what Dr. Banzai's stand-in Mr. Peter Weller looks like, but we have no idea what "he" resembles. What is this person hiding?!

Sincerely, Mr. Sincerity

There you have it, Andrew – Dr. Banzai is a real man, and the event depicted in the film Buckaroo Banzai are based on real events. Also, you might not actually be a real person. Sorry.

YOUR TOP TEN FILMS OF 2014

1. *Boyhood*
2. *Nightcrawler*
3. *The Wolf Of Wall Street*
4. *Inside Llewyn Davis*
5. *Guardians Of The Galaxy*
6. *Edge Of Tomorrow*
7. *The Babadook*
8. *The Grand Budapest Hotel*
9. *Dawn Of The Planet Of The Apes*
10. *Her*

1 "The Raid 2! I still haven't seen *Nightcrawler* yet though and heard good things."

Nick Ray, via Facebook

2 "I'm tossing up between *Fury*, *The Raid 2*, *Big Hero 6* and *The Hobbit: The Desolation Of Smaug*."

Chris Booth, via Facebook

3 "I'm going to go with *Gone Girl* – she was one psycho bitch!"

Christine Speight, via Facebook

4 "Christopher Nolan's *Interstellar* and *X-Men: Days Of Future Past*."

Mitchell McLaughlin, via Facebook

5 "Grand Budapest Hotel, *Boyhood*, *Interstellar* and *Guardians Of The Galaxy*."

Sonia Dong, via Facebook

6 "I'm gonna go with *Transformers: Age Of Extinction* and *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles*."

Riley Harris, via Facebook

7 "Snowpiercer – still do not know what they were feeding the people down the back after they stopped eating each others' arms."

James Pizsey, via Facebook

8 "Boyhood. Just such a sweet film but thought-provoking and so originally told."

Peter Horsman, via Facebook

9 "Interstellar for being a wild ride, *Grand Budapest Hotel* for being a fun ride."

Michael Soutar, via Twitter

10 "Edge Of Tomorrow – Tom Cruise was really great in it. Underrated film!"

Alana Smith, via Twitter

Have an idea for a Top 10 you'd like to see in *Empire*? Email us at empire@bauer-media.com.au or head to www.facebook.com/EmpireAust with your choices.

GOOD THINGS COME TO THOSE WHO KUWAIT

→ So *Mad Max: Fury Road* is about to come out? Here we are two Iraq wars later and it's still not here. But I can wait some more! I would like to read a feature one day on his abandoned *Justice League* film too. And George Miller is now 69! To the cryogenics chamber!

Mitchell Hall, Asquith NSW

You're not alone in your anticipation, Mitchell – check the masthead, page 8...

Be A Twit-ic!
@EmpireAust Does Paper Planes fly high? Why yes... yes it does!
#PaperPlanesMovie
Lauren Saylor
@LozLoz1988



ONE STAR FOR GIVING ONE STAR

→ Whenever there are no extras on DVD releases you give the extras one star in your review ratings. Surely if there are no extras the disc should be given no stars? It does not make sense to give a film one star for extras that don't exist.

Peter Fraser, via email

Basically we award 'no extras' one star as a way of saying "try harder, extras people!" Well, someone has to tell them...

**SEE
PAGE
38!**



SUBSCRIBE YOUR WAY, TODAY!

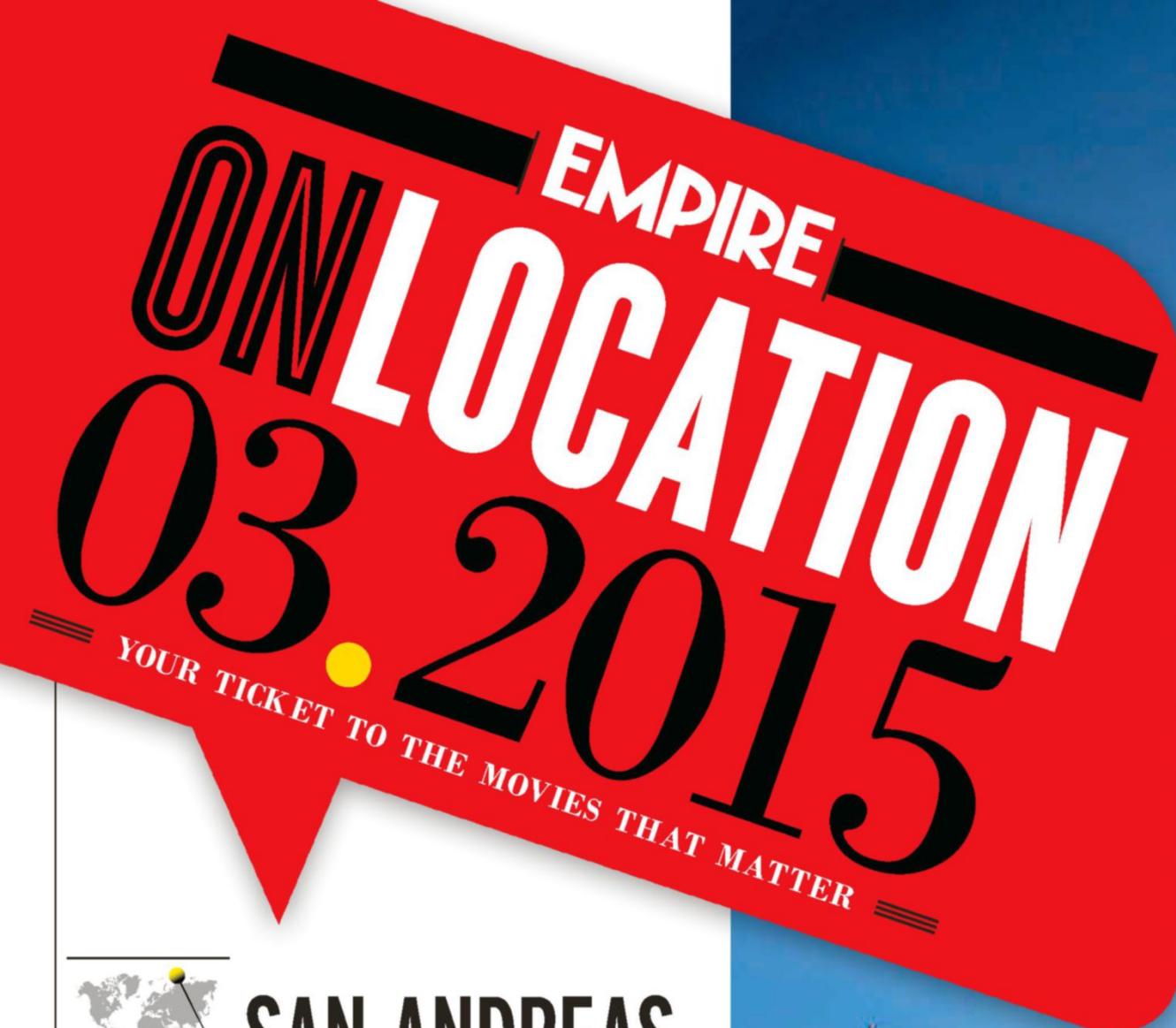
12 MONTHS FOR \$69.95

24 MONTHS FOR \$149.95

SUBSCRIBE TO EMPIRE FOR 24 MONTHS AND YOU'LL RECEIVE YOUR CHOICE OF PRIDE OR SON OF A GUN ON DVD, A COPY OF EMPIRE'S THE GREATEST MOVIES YOU'LL NEVER SEE + AN EMPIRE CAP!



TERMS AND CONDITIONS: This offer expires at 11:59pm on 8 March 2015 and is available to subscribers within Australia only. This offer excludes *Empire* special editions and one shots. Please allow six to eight weeks for delivery of your first issue. For full terms and conditions, see www.magshop.com.au/empire. Please see page eight for our Privacy Notice. If you do not want your information provided to any organisation not associated with this offer, please indicate this clearly at the point of purchase or notify the Promoter in writing.



SAN ANDREAS

LOCATION: GOLD COAST, AUSTRALIA

The Rock versus a hard place

VILLAGE ROADSHOW STUDIOS (pictured) on Australia's Gold Coast takes up a fair chunk of real estate, and right now it feels like *San Andreas*, Warner Bros.' forthcoming 3D earthquake actioner, is using every last inch. An original property that's boldly releasing amid the jostle of mid-year blockbuster heavyweights, everything about this production is big. Including, of course, its star.

Dwayne Johnson sits with *Empire* in a threadbare unit tent. Clad in his favourite Muhammad Ali hoodie, he's in high spirits, despite having spent the day in the facility's five-metre deep, 1.5 million-gallon water tank. "In this

navigate a helicopter, I navigate a plane, I navigate a boat – flying and driving every vehicle you could imagine," he grins. Adding to his pantheon of larger-than-life heroes, he's playing Ray Gaines, a fire and rescue helicopter pilot who, when The Big One finally hits California, scrambles frantically from LA to San Francisco with his ex-wife (Carla Gugino) to find their only living child (*True Detective's* Alexandra Daddario) as the entire west coast crumples beneath them.

This gargantuan production might only be director Brad Peyton's third movie (his second, following *Journey 2: The Mysterious Island*, with Johnson), but he's hardly fazed. "This is the



BULLETIN TOM CRUISE AND DOUG LIMAN PLAN MEDELLIN DRUG CARTEL DRAMA **MENA** > SCARLETT



Director Brad Peyton prepares Johnson for his latest journey.

most complex movie of this kind that you could possibly make," he explains. "There are soooo many variables in it, that you have to plan it, just so that you can pick out this piece, get that element, add this visual effect, and then comp all these things together – there are shots that literally have 15 elements in them."

Appropriately for a movie about an earthquake, the adjective most used by cast and crew is "grounded". Peyton is aiming for full audience immersion. "I've invested a lot in putting the audience inside events. We have a set-piece that travels with a character through a collapsing building for about three minutes. We don't cut." *San Andreas*' visual style could be as much *Children Of Men* as, well, *Earthquake*.

For Johnson, that groundedness also applies to the characters. "A lot of times in movies like this – and it's not a knock, because they're very good – they kind of just touch on the issues the family has and then go to the big explosions and dazzling effects. But we really take moments and delve into mending their issues." He pauses. "Although to be clear, we're not making *The Notebook* – there's a reason we're releasing in [the U.S.] summer!"

SAM TOY

SAN ANDREAS IS OUT ON MAY 28.

Dwayne Johnson in his helicopter flying over, ahem, the rock...

JOHANSSON SET TO STAR IN *GHOST IN THE SHELL* ➤ HUGH JACKMAN TO STAR IN *EDDIE THE EAGLE* BIOPIC



‘71

LOCATION: BLACKBURN, ENGLAND

Jack O'Connell is Norn Iron Man

EMPIRE HAS COME TO Blackburn, Lancashire, whian annoying heatwave. On the outskirts of town, in a red-brick estate, a street's been transformed into a Belfast war zone. Burnt-out bus at one end. Humber Pig at the other. And milling in the centre, a mob of extras, dressed like *Night Of The Living '70s*. It's supposed to be winter. The sun thinks otherwise. Every time a cloud appears, there's a rush to shoot. As soon as director Yann Demange calls action, the mood turns black: bin lids clash, rocks hurl and the mob descends on a group of squaddies. Once the soldiers retreat, filming stops, but the rioters keep rioting, hurling rubber rocks. When Demange calls it "controlled chaos" he's not kidding. It's fantastically scary.

The scene being shot is an early, pivotal moment in '71, Demange's theatrical debut (he directed Charlie Brooker zom-com *Dead Set*). Abandoned by his unit during the riot, the film follows Jack O'Connell's British soldier as he tries to survive the night in a hostile city, pursued by an IRA



Jack O'Connell as a British soldier on the mean streets of Belfast.



A camera crew captures the riot scene.

THE INSIDE TRACK
1971 SAW INTERNMENT WITHOUT TRIAL INTRODUCED IN NORTHERN IRELAND, AND THE DEMOCRATIC UNIONIST PARTY (DUP) WAS FORMED.

street gang. "Man, it's a tough, tough shoot," says O'Connell, during a cigarette break. "After filming endless nights, I thought this would be a reprieve. Now we're in a heatwave shooting a full-scale riot – and look at us. Everyone's wearing wool."

It's worth the sweat. A hit at last year's Berlinale, '71 recreates an era rarely seen on screen, mapping the complex birth of The Troubles through a breathless manhunt movie. "First time I read the script [by Gregory Burke], I

pictured *Escape From New York*, or *Apocalypto* in Belfast," says Demange. "I've never had a burning desire to tell a story about The Troubles, but the idea of this anchorless kid joining the army and being sent to fight a dirty war struck me as pertinent. You could be talking about Iraq or Afghanistan, on home turf. Or, the apocalyptic version of home."

Still, you wonder why the in-demand O'Connell picked such an intensely physical role for his lead debut. "Well, I'm half Irish myself," he says. "And this gives an unbiased account of the era. There's no easy answers, and no blame: there's wrongdoing on every side."

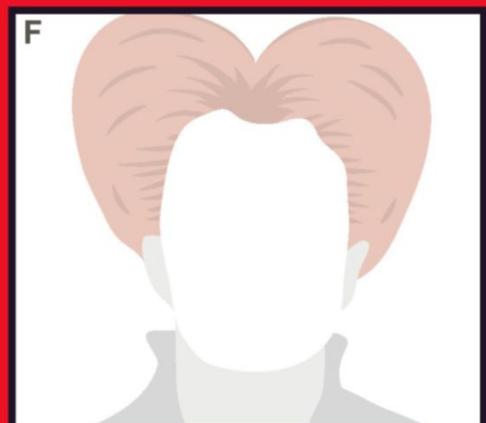
January's *Unbroken* laid the groundwork for O'Connell's leading man cred, and romance *Tulip Fever* will dazzle the ladies later in 2015, but this may be the picture he is remembered for most for this year. "More than anybody, Jack reminds me of a young Gary Oldman," says Demange. "I have to say, he's the bollocks in this. The only problem has been reminding him to hold back." **SIMON CROOK**

'71 IS OUT ON APRIL 2.

► GONE GIRL DUO DAVID FINCHER AND BEN AFFLECK TO REMAKE HITCHCOCK'S STRANGERS ON A TRAIN

KNOW YOUR ICONS

Can you match these famous follicles with their iconic film?



A: GONE WITH THE WIND
B: THE BIG LEBOWSKI
C: GANGS OF NEW YORK
D: TAXI DRIVER
E: THE HENDERSONS
F: SUPERMAN THE MOVIE
G: HARRY AND THE HENDERSONS
H: THE GODFATHER

Recognise these famous follicles from iconic films?

Stream blockbuster movies, cinema classics and more with Quickflix. Pay only \$9.99 to get 3 months of streaming to enjoy the icons of cinema!

To redeem this offer, visit:
quickflix.com.au/empirestreaming



Quickflix

EMPIRE THE SLATE

— NEWS ETC. —

THE FACE

ALICIA VIKANDER

The Woman From U.N.C.L.E.

ALICIA VIKANDER NEEDS A BREAK. "I THINK I'VE BEEN IN SWEDEN FOR three days this year," laughs the Gothenburg native, within touching distance of a long-awaited day out with her mum in London. But Momma Vikander's loss has been moviegoers' gain. The one-time ballet student has lit up *Anna Karenina* and *Son Of A Gun* and will soon go robotic in Alex Garland's *Ex Machina*, marrying empathetic character acting with luminousness. Not everything is right in the Vikanderverse, however. "Everyone in *Ex Machina* got a part in *Star Wars* except me," she mock-grumbles of co-stars Domhnall Gleeson and Oscar Isaac.

An even busier 2015 lies ahead. Vikander plays a motor mechanic in *The Man From U.N.C.L.E.* ("I didn't have a driving licence," she reveals with a sheepish grin, "but I didn't tell them until I got the part"), as well as the lead in period romance *Tulip Fever*. But it's Tom Hooper's 2016 pic *The Danish Girl*, a biopic of artist and later transgender woman Einar Wegener, which could be her big awards breakthrough. It was, like all her scripts, approved by her most dutiful script readers. "My parents both picked up *The Danish Girl*," she laughs. "My dad picked up the phone and said, 'You're doing this one!'"

PHIL DE SEMLYEN

EX MACHINA AND THE MAN FROM U.N.C.L.E. ARE OUT IN 2015 AND ARE PREVIEWED ON PAGES 52 AND 74.

CORBIS

THE HOBBIT™

THE BATTLE OF THE FIVE ARMIES



OFFICIAL LICENSED JEWELLERY
WWW.RING-LEADERS.COM

© WBEI™ Middle-earth Ent. Lic. to New Line.
(s14)

MG

NEW LINE CINEMA



FREE POSTER WITH PURCHASE!
Purchase a Smaug the Magnificent pendant from
The Hobbit: The Desolation of Smaug
and receive an official A2 poster.

W&D

ON THE RADAR



← Michael Keaton will star with Tom Hiddleston in big ape prequel *Kong: Skull Island*. Or *Batman V Loki*, as we're already calling it.



← Matthew McConaughey and Gugu Mbatha-Raw will star in Gary Ross's slavery drama, *The Free State Of Jones*. Oscars ahoy!



← Scarlett Johansson will kick butt and hopefully explain the plot in *Ghost In The Shell*, based on the extremely bonkers Japanese anime.

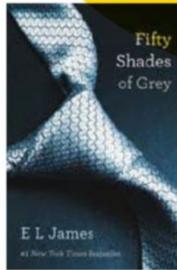


SEXY TIMES
Tap to watch the *50 Shades* trailer. (Yes, again.)

THE LIST

31

THINGS YOU DIDN'T KNOW ABOUT FIFTY SHADES OF GREY



Director Sam Taylor-Johnson guides us through the year's raciest blockbuster...

1 Seventy million. That's how many copies of *Fifty Shades Of Grey*, E.L. James's sex-soaked love story, have sold around the world. Sales of its sequels, *Fifty Shades Darker* and *Fifty Shades Freed*, take the series over the 100 million mark.

2 Not bad for a bit of modified *Twilight* fan-fic, which is how the novel began life online



in 2009. Titled *Master Of The Universe* and not, astonishingly, *Twi-Hard*, it took place in an alternative universe where Edward Cullen, the glittery vamp played by Robert Pattinson in the *Twilight* movies, was reimagined as a BDSM-loving billionaire.

- 3 BDSM, by the way, stands for "bondage, domination and sado-masochism". We had to Google that. Honest.
- 4 James was initially known as *Snowqueens Icedragon*. As its popularity increased, she decided to rewrite *Master Of The Universe* with original character names and no vampirism. So Edward became Christian Grey, and Bella Swan turned into Anastasia Steele.
- 5 It's hard to find *Master Of The Universe* online these days, but if you look hard enough, remnants exist.
- 6 After a bidding war involving several studios, James sold the rights in March 2012 to Universal and Focus Features for a rumoured \$5 million, plus a percentage of the gross.

7 Which is where Sam Taylor-Johnson (below right) first heard of it. "I was at a dinner and met James Schamus, who was head of Focus Features. I was trying to make conversation with someone I didn't know and said, 'Are you doing anything exciting?' He said, 'We've just acquired the rights to *Fifty Shades Of Grey*.' I remember thinking, 'Wow, I wonder who'll do that and how they'll do it...'"

- 8 It was reported that James's demands for selling the rights involved the right to choose the director, the screenplay, locations and her producing partners.
- 9 In the end, she chose Michael De Luca and Dana Brunetti, who had



← Matt Damon will get shrunk down in Alexander Payne's sci-fi satire, *Downsizing*. Or as we like to call it, *Anti-Corporation Man*. GEDDIT?!



← Then Damon and Paul Greengrass will reteam for the new *Bourne* movie, in which we try to forget *The Bourne Legacy* ever happened.



← *Avatar 2* may, as James Cameron said, make you "shit yourselves", but it's moved to December 2017. Plenty of time to buy nappies.

previously produced *Captain Phillips* and *The Social Network*.

10 Directors reportedly in the running included Joe Wright – who turned down the job – Patty Jenkins, Bill Condon, Bennett Miller, Gus Van Sant and Steven Soderbergh.

11 Taylor-Johnson, the British artist-turned-director, got the gig almost by accident. "I just pitched up," she laughs of the meeting, which was her first since returning to work after taking time off to have children. "I was thinking, 'It'll be good for me to meet the heads of the studios, and we'll start with this.' I'm obviously better at it than I thought!"

12 The 47-year-old director put together a mood reel for the meeting, containing clips from the likes of *The Thomas Crown Affair* and *Last Tango In Paris*, and even included one of Christian Bale as Batman, "to give a good idea of power and success and vulnerability and sex".

13 The screenplay was written by another Brit, *Saving Mr. Banks*' Kelly Marcel, who had to turn James's first-person novel (sample line: "He's my very own Christian Grey-flavoured popsicle") into a workable screenplay.

14 Patrick Marber and Mark Bomback also contributed to the script, but will likely be uncredited. "If I start talking about them," says Taylor-Johnson, "I'll probably open up a huge can of worms."

15 The audition piece for Anastasia Steele was a four-page monologue from Ingmar Bergman's masterpiece, *Persona*.

16 The likes of Ryan Gosling and Garrett Hedlund were bandied around for Christian Grey, while Taylor-Johnson's husband, Aaron, had also been rumoured at one point. But on a movie already full of Johnsons, that may have been one too many.



17 Charlie Hunnam and Dakota Johnson (daughter of Don Johnson and Melanie Griffith) were eventually cast in the lead roles. The stage was set for an explosive screen coupling.



18 Not so fast. In October of 2013, Hunnam pulled out prematurely, mumbling something about scheduling conflicts and how this has never happened to him before.

19 "It was a little galling," says Taylor-Johnson of Hunnam's departure. "But I definitely had a sense it was coming, and that he was becoming anxious about it. It was more an anxiety of where books two and three would go, and how that would work, and stepping into such a vast unknown."

20 Less than two weeks after Hunnam left, Northern Irish M.T.A. Jamie Dornan, hot from the success of *The Fall*, replaced him. "Jamie owns Christian Grey now," says Taylor-Johnson.

21 Filming began in Vancouver (doubling for Seattle) in December 2013, with the working title *The Adventures Of Max & Banks*.

22 The final budget was around \$40 million, what Christian Grey calls "walking-around money".

23 Let's talk about sex. The books' sex scenes are notoriously explicit. There was speculation that the film might go all-out to simulate that, and

maybe even risk a dreaded NC-17 rating in the States.

24 Not so, says the director. "It's a studio movie. We go pretty far. I would never be able to make a movie under a studio umbrella that's like *Blue Is The Warmest Colour* or *In The Realm Of The Senses*."

25 James L. Brooks advised the director to change her socks daily at 3 pm during filming, and she took him up on it.

26 She treated the sex scenes like action sequences. "I felt it was really important that each sex scene had a different character. I didn't want everyone to go, 'Oh, they're at it again!'"

27 The MPAA, which frowns upon regulation thrusting, granted the film an R. Marcel had said an NC-17 might have been a possibility, which would have been a commercial kiss of death.

28 The film's first trailer, which launched in July, had 93 million views, making it 2014's most popular, ahead of *Avengers: Age Of Ultron* and *Star Wars: The Force Awakens*.

29 De Luca confirmed to us that the cast had signed on for all three movies. "You would need people who would commit to a trilogy sight unseen on the strength of the scripts." However, no concrete plans have been announced for sequels. "At this stage, the studio is wisely waiting and seeing how it does," says Taylor-Johnson.

30 The soundtrack includes *Earned It*, by The Weeknd, the video for which the *Fifty Shades* helmer directed just days after locking the film itself. "I'm a glutton for punishment," she laughs. "I'm absolutely fucking shattered."

31 Some experts think there are more than 150 shades of grey. A quick search on the Dulux website reveals just 17. It's all very confusing.

FIFTY SHADES OF GREY IS OUT ON FEBRUARY 12.



FIRST LOOK

SPY GAME FOR A LAUGH

EXCLUSIVE

MELISSA McCARTHY IS THE NEW JAMES BOND. SORT OF

ACCORDING TO THE CHINESE ZODIAC, 2015 is the Year Of The Sheep. But you could be forgiven for thinking that it's actually the Year Of The Spy.

Never mind comic book movies – this year will see a glut of films about gadget-wielding, sharp-suited do-gooders. There's the daddy of them all, of course, with James Bond returning in *Spectre*, while various pretenders to the throne include Colin Firth in *Kingsman: The Secret Service* and Henry Cavill and Armie Hammer as the men from U.N.C.L.E.. Even Sacha Baron Cohen will get in on the act in the brilliantly named

and still shrouded-in-secrecy *Grimsby*.

And then there's the most unlikely of them all: Melissa McCarthy. In *Spy* – formerly known as *Susan Cooper* – the actress is the sort of well-trained killing machine that would give 007 the willies. Well, ish.

"She's basically a woman down in the basement of the CIA," explains Paul Feig, the movie's writer-director, of McCarthy's Susan Cooper. "She's the earpiece girl and eyepiece girl to a super-spy played by Jude Law. She clearly has a crush on Jude, she's been working for him for 10 years. And one day, something happens where she's the



Above: Melissa McCarthy and Jude Law try Heston's new invisible starter in *Spy*.

Top right: director Paul Feig drives McCarthy bats on set.

THINGS WE'VE LEARNED



← Cary Elwes is a big Columbo fan. His favourite episode? The one with John Cassavetes.



← Tim Burton operated a Muppet in *The Muppet Movie*. The one with the startled look on its face, presumably.



only person who can go out in the field. Things have gone wrong and she needs to fix it."

And if you think you can fill in the blanks from there, Feig says you'd be wrong. McCarthy may have played a brash, foul-mouthed extrovert in her previous collaborations with Feig, *Bridesmaids* and *The Heat*, but the director wants to mine a different part of her repertoire this time. "It is a different Melissa than you've seen," says Feig. "Susan is very smart and meek, and it's fun to see that from Melissa. We always have her playing these balls-out characters. I said, 'I want to see you.' When it first got announced, all reporters automatically wrote, 'Melissa McCarthy plays a bumbling spy.' She's not bumbling. Susan has the skill set – now she has to awaken the skill set."

In fact, while *The Heat* showcased McCarthy's action heroine credentials, *Spy* will take that a step or two further, as she embarks on a dangerous mission that requires her to assume different personas, team up with Jason Statham's buff CIA agent ("Statham destroys in the role," says Feig) and take on the bad guys in a variety of non-bumbling, badass ways.

"The genesis of this was, I've always wanted to direct a James Bond movie," says Feig. "I realised early on that they're never going to let me direct a James Bond movie – why would you? I wouldn't! I'm just a good comedy guy. But there's a lot of action in this one. Really good action. There's one fight scene that I'm really excited about, involving Melissa and Nargis Fakhri, who is gorgeous and deadly. There's all kinds of stuff going on..." **CHRIS HEWITT**

SPY IS OUT ON MAY 21.



DIRECTOR PAUL FEIG TALKS HIS REBOOT OF *GHOSTBUSTERS*

WHEN IS *GHOSTBUSTERS* 3 NOT *Ghostbusters* 3? Well, when Paul Feig was announced as the co-writer/director of the long-gestating third instalment in the franchise, two major developments came with him: an all-female crew of 'Busters would suit up, and it would be a reboot instead. *Empire* spoke to Feig about what he has planned, and just who he's gonna call...

ON REBOOTING THE FRANCHISE

"I have too much respect for the original one [*to do a sequel*]. There's also the feeling that once the world knows ghosts and has seen them busted on such a large scale, they run the risk of becoming pedestrian. There's something fun about introducing our world, which has never seen ghosts, to the phenomenon of ghosts. I love origin stories and to introduce new characters."

ON "FUNNY WOMEN"

"A lot of people accused it of being a gimmick. I guess I can see the cynics'

view of it, but for me I just love working with funny women. People said, 'Why don't you do a mix?' I'm just more interested in the idea of lady *Ghostbusters*. It's the way my brain works."

ON THE TITLE

"It won't be called *Lady Ghostbusters*! Certainly not... *Ghostbustieres* is the way we're going to go." It's actually likely to simply be *Ghostbusters*.

ON CASTING

Rebel Wilson has admitted meeting Feig about the movie, while it doesn't take a genius to link Melissa McCarthy to the project. "Right now, honestly, there could be 50 *Ghostbusters*. I'm just waiting to get our first draft of the script together to go, 'Who makes sense in these roles?' If I put the list in front of me of people that have said

they want to do it, talk about a *Sophie's Choice*. When you do a movie like *Ghostbusters*, people get very interested."

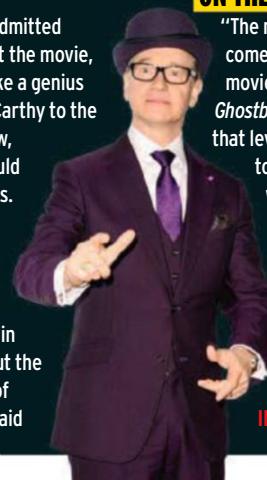
ON MIXING SCARES AND LAUGHS

"I want ours to be scarier than the original, to be quite honest. Katie [Dippold, co-writer] and I are so focused on wanting to do scary comedy. We don't want to hold back."

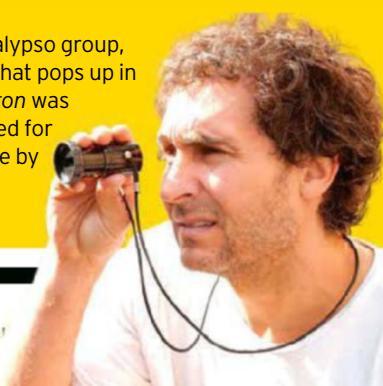
ON THE RATING

"The reason I do a lot of R-rated comedies is that you want a movie to feel honest. But the *Ghostbusters* world doesn't need that level of swearing. We'll have to be PG-13 with this one. I would love to make it R-rated, but I won't. You want the biggest number of people to watch it and not be put off by it!" **CHRIS HEWITT**

***GHOSTBUSTERS* IS OUT IN 2016.**



← The calypso group, D Lime, that pops up in *Paddington* was assembled for the movie by Damon Albarn.



← Doug Liman likes to watch other people watch his movies on planes.



← Bill Murray owns one of the beds glimpsed in the motel scene in *Dumb And Dumber To*.

TIME LINE

IS THIS THE MOST DANGEROUS MOVIE EVER MADE?

WHY *THE INTERVIEW* MIGHT KICK-START WORLD WAR III

F YOU'RE READING THIS IN THE MIDDLE OF the smoking ruins of a major city, mankind having bombed itself back to the Stone Age, and you're asking yourself, "How did it all come to this?", allow us to tell the tale of how a seemingly innocuous Seth Rogen-James Franco comedy led to catastrophic global conflict...

MARCH 21, 2013 Sony announces that Rogen and Evan Goldberg will write and direct *The Interview*. It will star Rogen and Franco as a TV producer and talk show host, who are recruited by the CIA to travel to North Korea to assassinate Kim Jong-un.

OCTOBER 10, 2013 Filming begins in Vancouver.

JUNE 11, 2014 Sony releases the teaser trailer for the movie, which has the bold tagline, "James Franco and Seth Rogen will attempt to assassinate Kim Jong-un."

JUNE 25, 2014 A spokesman for North Korea's Foreign Ministry issues a statement where, without naming the

film, he says that its release would be considered an "act of war... If the US administration allows and defends the showing of the film, a merciless countermeasure will be taken."

JULY 17, 2014 North Korea asks US President Barack Obama to halt *The Interview*'s release.

AUGUST 7, 2014 Sony halts the film's release by two months.

NOVEMBER 24, 2014 Sony is hit by a massive cyber-attack. Days later, Sony movies, including *Fury* and *Annie*, are released onto torrent sites.

DECEMBER 4, 2014 North Korea denies all responsibility for the hack attack.

DECEMBER 5, 2014 The hackers leak sensitive documents online, including Rogen and Franco's salaries.

DECEMBER 7, 2014 Rogen and Franco unveil their nude Christmas card. It's unclear if a copy is sent to Kim Jong-un.



Top: Larks in *The Interview*.
Above: Merry Christmas?



DECEMBER 8, 2014 The 'Guardians Of Peace' claim responsibility for the attack. In an email to Sony, they ask the studio to "stop immediately showing the movie of terrorism which can break the regional peace and cause the War."

DECEMBER 10, 2014 Further documents are leaked, including information about talks between Sony and Marvel to allow Spider-Man (below left) to take part in the Marvel Cinematic Universe and plans for the next *Jump Street* movie to become a *Men In Black* reboot as well.

DECEMBER 11, 2014 *The Interview* has a scaled back LA premiere and receives a mixed response from critics.

DECEMBER 16, 2014 Guardians Of Peace threaten cinemas that screen the film with 9/11 style attacks, prompting mass cancellations. Department of Homeland Security dismisses "active threat."

DECEMBER 18, 2014 Sony cancels *The Interview*'s theatrical, DVD and VOD release. The next day President Obama

THE HOBBIT: THE BATTLE FOR SCREEN TIME

NOW THAT PETER JACKSON'S HOBBIT SAGA IS OVER, WE CAN ANSWER THE BIGGEST QUESTION OF THEM ALL: JUST WHAT DID ALL THOSE DWARVES (13 OF THEM, DON'T FORGET) ACTUALLY DO? OUR CHART EXPLAINS ALL*

DWARF/ACTOR	NUMBER OF LINES (APPROX.)	DEFINING CHARACTERISTIC	BIG MOMENT
THORIN OAKENSHIELD (RICHARD ARMITAGE)	310	STUBBORN NORTHERN BASTARD	His showdown with Azog.
BALIN (KEN STOTT)	113	FATHERLY WISDOM	His account of Tharin's victory at Moria.
DWALIN (GRAHAM McTAVISH)	80	HEADBUTTING NUTJOB	His introduction, full of brotherly head-butting and a truly insatiable appetite.
BOFUR (JAMES NESBITT)	64	CHEEKY CHAPPIE	Oversleeping and missing the boat to the Lonely Mountain.
KILI (AIDAN TURNER)	67	HOT DWARF	Giving Evangeline Lilly's Tauriel a gift to remember him by. Not that.
FILI (DEAN O'GORMAN)	41	SLIGHTLY LESS HOT DWARF	Staying at his wounded brother's side in <i>The Desolation Of Smaug</i> .
GLOIN (PETER HAMBLETON)	22	MOANING	Upon seeing the Lonely Mountain up close, Gloin quits complaining and hands over all his cash to the quest.
DORI (MARK HADLOW)	17	FAMILIAL CHEER	He offers Gandalf a cup of tea.
OIN (JOHN CALLEN)	16	HARD OF HEARING	Mistaking a thrush for a raven.
ORI (ADAM BROWN)	15	YOUTHFUL ENTHUSIASM	He doesn't like green food.
BOMBUR (STEPHEN HUNTER)	0	MUTE BUMBLING	His spinning barrel attack in <i>The Desolation Of Smaug</i> . Speaks volumes.
NORI (JED BROPHY)	8	STOIC REACTIONS	Um...
BIFUR (WILLIAM KIRCHER)	4	ENIGMATIC YELPS	Erm...

criticises Sony for caving to the terrorist threat. The FBI connects the cyber attack to North Korea.

DECEMBER 22, 2014 After North Korea's internet shuts down, it points the finger at the US. The next day their internet is reinstated and Sony announces a limited Christmas Day theatrical release.

JANUARY 2, 2015 President Obama green-lights US sanctions against North Korea in retaliation, the first time it has done so for a cyber attack. Two days later North Korea calls the sanctions "inveterate repugnancy and hostility."

JANUARY 24, 2015 *The Interview* begins streaming on Netflix in the US and Canada. Sony reveal the film has made \$40 million in rentals and sales, putting it on track to beat *Bridesmaids* as the biggest online release ever.

FEBRUARY 12, 2015 *The Interview* is released in Australia. Everyone crosses their fingers.

THE INTERVIEW IS OUT ON FEBRUARY 12.



FIRE UP!
Tap to watch Sean Penn's *The Gunman* trailer!



FIRST WORD

THE PENN IS MIGHTIER THAN THE SWORD

SEAN PENN JOINS THE GERI-ACTION GANG IN *THE GUNMAN*

THE THING IS," SAYS *THE GUNMAN* DIRECTOR Pierre Morel, of his attempts to recruit Hollywood's newest – and most unlikely – action hero, "When you manage to convince Sean Penn to do an action movie..." He chuckles, almost as if he can't quite believe he managed it. He's not alone.

Sean Penn (above) is many things. Two-time Academy Award-winner. Humanitarian. The soon-to-be Mr. Charlize Theron (well, rumoured). But he's never been one to throw himself around a room while wielding a machine gun. Yet in *The Gunman*, that's just what he finds himself doing as ace former assassin Jim Terrier, forced into action when a past mistake rears its ugly head. Penn, who hasn't done anything this commercial since he dated Phoebe and her twin sister Ursula on *Friends*, came onto the scene after a brief attempt at reuniting Morel with his *Taken* star, Liam Neeson, failed to ignite.

"The first conversation was on the phone," recalls Morel. "We talked over a version of the script which was not the one we shot! You need to bring him a multi-layered character

Stop! Or My Knee Will Pop!
Top to bottom: Keanu Reeves; Bruce Willis; Sylvester Stallone and Denzel Washington.



and a complex story, otherwise it's not interesting – to him or to me. But Sean is a physical guy – he lives in California, he's surfed all his life. We only see him as Harvey Milk. He's not that guy at all."

Still, at 54, Penn's late entry into the firing-your-gun-into-the-air-and-going-"*aaaaah!*" stakes sees him become Hollywood's latest geri-action hero. A term coined after Neeson's success bludgeoning bad guys with his bus pass in the *Taken* series, the club has since expanded to include the likes of seasoned head-crushers like Denzel Washington, Bruce Willis and Sylvester Stallone, all of whom have ages bigger than their bodycounts, while 50 year-old whippersnapper Keanu Reeves joined the club with April's *John Wick*. While most movies from this Grandad's Army don't make concessions for their heroes' age, Morel says *The Gunman* will be different.

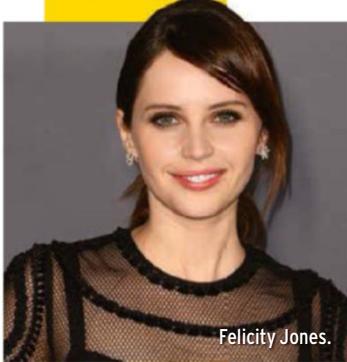
"He's not a superhero," says the director. "He's a regular guy. He has flaws and physical issues which limit his capacity to deal with stress. We tried to make it plausible. It is very realistic." **CHRIS HEWITT**

THE GUNMAN IS OUT ON MARCH 19.

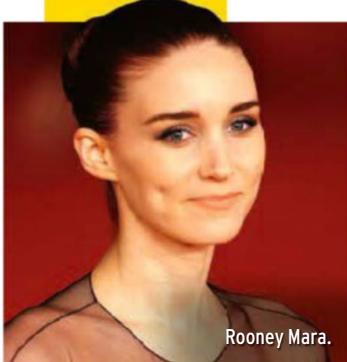
THIS MONTH IN STAR WARS



The Raid's Yayan Ruhian.



Felicity Jones.



Rooney Mara.



Tatiana Maslany.

CONFIRMED!

If you've ever thought that *Star Wars* films needed more punching, kicking and a bit where a guy embeds a baseball bat in someone's head, then you're in luck. It has emerged that J.J. Abrams has recruited the Indonesian trio of Iko Uwais, Yayan Ruhian and Cecep Arif Rahman to augment the action scenes in *Star Wars: The Force Awakens*. The trio, particularly Uwais and Ruhian, designed the utterly insane fights in Gareth Evans's *Raid* series, so it'll be fascinating to see what impact they have on *Star Wars*. Our money's on a 10-minute throwdown between Threepio and a vending machine.

AUDITIONED!

With *The Force Awakens* making its way through post-production, things are beginning to heat up over at the camp preparing the first of the spin-off *Star Wars* films. According to *The Hollywood Reporter*, Felicity Jones, Rooney Mara and *Orphan Black*'s Tatiana Maslany are all testing for a lead role. It's early days of course, and nothing is known about the character that the various actresses are auditioning for. Young Leia, anyone?

DEPARTED!

Gary Whitta, who had been writing the script for Gareth Edwards's standalone *Star Wars* movie, has left the project, with word on the street suggesting that Simon Kinberg – who's part of the *Star Wars* brain trust – may take his place. Early indications are that Edwards's movie may focus on Boba Fett, who recruits a team of bounty hunters to steal the plans for the Death Star. *The Dirty Dozen* in space? Where do we sign up?

BIG SCREEN RETRO

REPERTORY CINEMA MAKES A COMFY SPLASH AT THE MULTIPLEX



ONE OF THE CASUALTIES OF THE HOME entertainment revolution has been repertory cinemas. Watching classics has been mostly relegated to rentals in lounge rooms.

But the concept is enjoying a flush season at an unlikely venue: Event Cinemas in George St. Under the moniker 'In The House', the stalwart Sydney multiplex played classics last year to sold out Friday nights, proving the appetite for classic films (like *Jaws*, *The Terminator*, and *The Blues Brothers*) on big screens is far from sated.

"There's a huge desire for classic films but we wanted to make them an experience as well," says Event Cinema's Anthony Kieran, creator/curator for In The House. "We've set it up like a lounge room: there are welcome mats, bean bags, rugs, lamps – we're not just opening the doors, it's a rich experience. And it's only \$10!"

Adding to the experience is a red carpet arrival, prize giveaways and preview discussion with hosts Jason "Jabba" Davies (Channel 7's *Jabba's Movies*) and David "Quinny" Quinn from Supanova. "It feels like a club," Jabba tells *Empire*. "This is a gathering of kindred spirits, of people who would be at home with figurines who absolutely appreciate great films. There's a great community feeling. Most have been to multiple In The House screenings."

The second season of In The House commences fortnightly from February 6 with *Terminator 2: Judgement Day* and features *The Rocky Horror Picture Show*, *Taxi Driver*, *The Princess Bride*, *Mad Max 2* and more. Perhaps the best part is the ticket price: \$10. And for those out of Sydney, stay tuned, says Anthony Kieran. "We're looking at putting In The House in other locations, that's how much a success it's been here."

FOR THE FULL 'IN THE HOUSE' PROGRAM AND TICKETS, GO TO EVENTCINEMAS.COM.AU





LIAM NEESON

He has a very particular set of grills

On a scale from one to 10, how famous are you?

In LA, I may be up to an eight. In New York, they don't give a fuck, so I could be an eight but they'd let you know that you're maybe a six. Or maybe a five. That's what I like about New York. Back home in Northern Ireland, I'm an eight or a nine. "There's the Big Man, who the fuck does he think he is?"

What's your favourite album?

The Wall, Pink Floyd. I still play that on a very regular basis.

When have you been most starstruck?

Meeting Muhammad Ali at the Dorchester Hotel, it was either 1981 or 1982. My knees literally went weak. He signed a ratty piece of paper that I had, for my father. I was in awe. He still is The Man.

Who was your first movie crush?

It was a lady I recently had the honour of presenting an Academy Award to in Los Angeles, and she goes by the name of Maureen O'Hara. She's 94 years of age. She was my first crush, and then I really fell in love with her when I saw *The Quiet Man*, directed by John Ford. She's in a wheelchair now, but she still has that beautiful bone structure.

Do people ever quote your lines back to you?

It would tend to be the *Taken* thing. "I

don't know who you are, I don't know what you want", that sort of stuff.

Who did you play in your first ever school play?

It was a character called Bartley in John Millington Synge's *Riders To The Sea*. I think I was maybe 12. That was when the bug started to burrow itself into me.

Which film have you seen more than any other?

Spielberg's *Jaws*. Even though I know the shark's fucking rubber and they had terrible trouble with it and I know umpteen stories that Steven has told me, it still takes me in. Robert Shaw's speech at the end is beautiful. Screen acting does not get any better than that speech.

What's your favourite joke?

It's Chicago, in the Depression era. This guy has lost his job, his wife leaves him and takes the kids. He's going to commit suicide. He lies down on the railway tracks, train driver sees him, screeches to a halt inches from his body. Guy says, "Fuck this." So he goes to a bar that he knows Al Capone frequents. Capone walks in with big henchmen with guns and this beautiful blonde by his side. The guy goes over, he gets a glass of water, and throws it in Capone's face. He stands there, waiting to be shot. Al Capone wipes the water from his eyes and says, "I like a guy with guts." So now the wee

"Robert Shaw's speech at the end is beautiful. Screen acting does not get any better than that speech."



NEESON FACTS!

→ Helen Mirren taught him how to drive.

→ He recently told a reporter he'd be open to reprising his role of Jedi Qui-Gon Jinn from *Star Wars: Episode I – The Phantom Menace*. Yay?

→ He's a former Irish Youth Champion boxer.



guy gathers up the courage and sits down beside the blonde, as Al Capone's looking at him. The guy puts his hand on the blonde's knee and gradually sidles it up under her skirt. As he reaches the magic spot, the blonde slips him this note under the table. He opens the note and what it says is, "When you reach my balls, play it cool – Eliot Ness." That's the fucking joke.

On a scale of one to 10, how hairy is your arse?

Are we talking the immediate arse, or from the crack up to the waist?

The immediate arse.

Maybe a two. That's natural, yeah.

CHRIS HEWITT

TAKEN 3 IS OUT NOW.

THREEPI-OH!

Love is a many splendoured thing

CHAPPIE AND EX MACHINA MAY WELL ASK THE QUESTION: can a robot feel love? This pic, from the 1978 Academy Awards, may claim to prove that androids may get a touch of the infat with their fellow kind. Maybe. One thing is for certain: C-3PO (yes, it is Anthony Daniels inside the gold and the black bow tie) may have mistaken Oscar for the real thing. And it doesn't get much more human than that.

The

EMPIRE

TOP 10

#159

CLASSICS THAT BOMBED

THE FILM FANATIC'S FAVOURITE LIST

1 FIGHT CLUB (1999)

Fight Club, fittingly, has a bruised and battered history that belies its ultimate fate as a classic film. With a budget that ballooned from \$50 million to \$63 million, David Fincher's blood-splattered dissection of masculinity met with disdain from studio executives, who, not knowing what to do with it, spent \$20 million marketing it as a knuckle-dusting action film (it was even advertised during the WWE). *Fight Club* earned a relatively paltry \$37 million during its US theatrical run, and critics at the time were divided

over the film's violent content and tone (*Time*'s Richard Schickel called it "conventionally gimmicky"). Redemption came in the form of DVD and Blu-ray sales, the film becoming one of Fox's highest sellers, and critical re-evaluation has led to it gracing several top 10 'Best Films Of All Time' lists (including this very mag). And the fact that nary a day goes by that you don't hear someone utter "The first rule of fight club is you do not talk about fight club" only further proves the film's bone-crunching impact.

BREAKDOWN

James Jennings talks good films that do bad B.O. Hollywood, she be a fickle mistress. Also, realistically, one completely unable to predict what will hit and what will tank. Brad Bird's brilliant 2D animation *The Iron Giant* (1999) fizzled whereas *The Incredibles* (2004) flew; Joss Whedon's fun *Serenity* (2005) stalled while *The Avengers* (2012) scored big. The list of cult films that made little money, it seems, is endless: *Dazed And Confused*, *Office Space*, *Donnie Darko* etc. The lesson? No-one knows nothin', clearly.



2 THE SHAWSHANK REDEMPTION (1994)

Ever notice that, along with *Braveheart*, an obscene amount of men list this as their favourite film of all time? Such viewer enthusiasm would've likely been appreciated by the filmmakers around the time of *Shawshank*'s release: low audience numbers meant that the film only just scraped past its \$25 million budget with \$28.3 million (\$9 million of that arriving after the film scored seven Oscar nominations, none of which resulted in a win). The film's status as a modern classic is reflected in its ranking of #1 on website iMDb's "Top 250" list, which is based on over a million votes.

3 CITIZEN KANE (1941)

Orson Welles's debut feature is now widely regarded as the greatest film of all time but, despite positive critical reception upon release and nine subsequent Oscar nominations, it lost money. Many put the financial failure down to the interference of newspaper magnate William Randolph Hearst, who was allegedly the inspiration for the film's title character. Many exhibitors refused to show the movie for fear of being sued for libel, and Hearst's radio stations and papers refused to mention *Citizen Kane* or run any advertisements promoting it, causing a total loss of \$160,000 during its theatrical run.

4 2001: A SPACE ODYSSEY (1968)

Serving as inspiration to major directors like Christopher Nolan (*Interstellar*) and Steven Spielberg (*Close Encounters Of The Third Kind*), Stanley Kubrick's sci-fi masterpiece met with a mixed reaction and poor box office upon its 1968 release (\$15 million against a reported \$12 million budget). Critical reaction was down the middle ("Morally pretentious," according to historian Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr.), many criticising its 142-minute run time. Re-releases saw the film eventually make \$190 million worldwide, although many modern viewers still like to complain about the film's languid pace.



5 THE WIZARD OF OZ (1939)

A notoriously difficult shoot that included wrangling over a hundred Munchkins, a director (Victor Fleming) who departed before shooting wrapped to go work on *Gone With The Wind* and an actor (Buddy Ebsen, originally cast as the Tin Man) whose allergic reaction to make-up saw him hospitalised, *The Wizard Of Oz* wound up costing studio MGM \$2,777,000 — at the time the studio's most expensive film ever. Even buoyed by positive reviews and Oscar noms, the film only just made its budget back with \$3,017,000, only collecting a profit with a 1949 re-release.

6 THE BIG LEBOWSKI (1998)

The Dude, Donnie, Walter and "pederast" Jesus may all be iconic characters now, but they certainly didn't find that many friends in 1998: The film only made \$17 million in the U.S. against a \$15 million budget, and critics weren't impressed, *The Toronto Star*'s Peter Howell stating, "It's hard to believe that this is the work of a team that won an Oscar last year for the original screenplay of *Fargo*." (Years later he proclaimed *Lebowski* as his favourite Coen's movie). The film's lasting popularity is undeniable, spawning its own annual festival and online religion (Dudeism!).

7 BLADE RUNNER (1982)

It's testament to *Blade Runner*'s cultural impact that a 33-year-old film that barely made its \$28 million budget back on its initial U.S. run is now being lined up for a sequel executive produced by original director Ridley Scott. It's not like shooting the original was pleasant: although pals now, Ridley Scott named star Harrison Ford as the "biggest pain in the arse" he'd ever worked with; Ford admitted that he and the director "tangled" and the star openly hated recording the controversial voice over: "A fucking nightmare... I went kicking and screaming to the studio to record it."



8 WILLY WONKA & THE CHOCOLATE FACTORY (1971)

Like *The Wizard Of Oz*, this adaptation of Roald Dahl's 1964 novel benefitted hugely from television re-runs, becoming a family classic despite a tepid box office reception upon release (the film made \$4 million against a \$3 million budget). The critics liked the film, but author Dahl was a vocal opponent after his script was rewritten by David Seltzer due to Dahl missing screenplay deadlines. Chief among his beefs with the film was the non-casting of Spike Milligan in the title role (which admittedly would've been quite amazing) and the addition of the famous "fizzy lifting drinks" sequence.

9 VERTIGO (1958)

Another film on the list that barely made back its cost at the U.S. box office (\$2,479,000), *Vertigo* overcame an initial spate of mixed reviews (including criticism about 25-year-old Kim Novak playing love interest to 50-year-old James Stewart) to become regarded as one of Alfred Hitchcock's greatest films. In 2012 it replaced *Citizen Kane* as the best film of all time on the British Film Institute's *Sight & Sound* critics' poll, a move that would've likely upset Orson Welles: he reportedly told director friend Henry Jaglom that *Vertigo* was "worse" than *Rear Window*, another Hitchcock film that failed to float Welles's boat.

AND THE WORST...

TRANSFORMERS: REVENGE OF THE FALLEN (2009)

The opposite of a *Bomb-To-Classic*? Shite that's box office catnip. *T:ROTF* is in the U.S. box office top 20 of all time and the dubious franchise's best performer, despite it being utterly execrable at every level.



10 IT'S A WONDERFUL LIFE (1946)

The Frank Capra Christmas staple was seen by critics as sentimental and old-fashioned when it was released on December 20, 1946, the \$3.18 million film recording a loss of \$525,000 at the box office for studio RKO. Again, TV saved the film's fortunes, director Capra telling *The Wall Street Journal* in 1984 that "The film has a life of its own now, and I can look at it like I had nothing to do with it. I'm like a parent whose kid grows up to be President. I'm proud."

Your gateway to the *Empire Social Scene*? EmpireOnline.com.au 

in CINEMAS

= NEW MOVIES REVIEWED AND RATED =

BLACK SEA

The Waves Of Fear

RELEASED MARCH 5

RATED M

DIRECTOR Kevin Macdonald

SCREENWRITER Dennis Kelly

CAST Jude Law, Scoot McNairy, Ben Mendelsohn, Grigoriy Dobrygin, Michael Smiley, Bobby Schofield, Konstantin Khabenskiy

RUNNING TIME 115 minutes

PLOT Commercial submariner

Robinson (Law) has dedicated his life to the sea, at the expense of his marriage and family. Abruptly laid-off by his callous company, he hears of a sunken submarine full of Nazi gold and assembles a diverse group of sailors to search for it in the Black Sea.

"GOLD CONJURES UP A MIST ABOUT A man," says Charles Dickens, "more destructive of all his old senses and lulling to his feelings than the fumes of charcoal." At least, that's what the internet tells us (it's in *Nicholas Nickleby*, apparently). Certainly, there's no disguising the lust that clouds the eyes of Jude Law's struggling submariner when he hears of the potential \$40 million bounty lying at the bottom of the Black Sea. In it he sees freedom: the chance to support – and perhaps win back – his estranged wife and child, the chance to escape his tough professional life, the chance to strike a blow against The Man. And,

well, who wouldn't want that?

It's a theme that has been explored often, with the golden connection specifically bringing to mind *The Treasure Of The Sierra Madre* and *The Man Who Would Be King*. There's perhaps no greater compliment to pay *Black Sea* than that it can stand proudly alongside those John Huston pictures. If not their equal, then it's certainly not embarrassed by the comparison. And it's better-looking. For while there's much to praise in *Black Sea* (and we will), nothing is more impressive than how it looks.

While the film versus digital debate rumbles somewhat tediously on, cinematographer

Christopher Ross shows just how effective and exciting the 'new' format can be, allowing for access to and an intimacy with the inevitably cramped submarine interiors, but also capturing the great, terrible beauty of the unknowable depths. The exterior shots of the submarine – in particular one startling wide shot as it glides through the gloom – provide *Black Sea* with a scale in the same way Jordan Cronenweth's work on *Blade Runner* gave that movie an epic sense (despite it taking place largely in dark rooms and on a one-street set). That is not the only science fiction echo here. For

FEBRUARY 9 – MARCH 8



ENTER BLACK SEA
Tap to see the trailer
for the movie!



LOOK
CLOSER

Jude Law's Robinson eyes a golden opportunity.



although yes, *Black Sea* recalls such classic mission movies as *The Wages Of Fear* or the desperate heists of *Rififi* and *Heat*, it also has the sense of dread, danger and being stranded as *Alien*. We've seen Tony Scott's submarine movie, *Crimson Tide*. This might be the closest we come to Ridley's.

This crew have given their marriages or health or happiness to their work, grinding hard to make ends meet and then being glibly discarded by people who could never themselves do the work that these men have mastered. This is what gives *Black Sea* a real power, in our long, drawn-out age of austerity.

Because their fate awaits many in any profession. When you dedicate yourself to a cause only to realise the people in charge don't understand your skills or 'their' product, and don't actually, even at a superficial level, give a shit about you. If you want loyalty, buy a dog.

Screenwriter Dennis Kelly's heroes are all flawed, relatable beings – not simple noble working men or suit-wearing stiffs. Some elements skirt with cliché: the family in the wallet, the character who is claustrophobic, the pregnant girl at home. And Law's flashbacks to life with his wife take on a white-bathed beauty that feels too self-consciously idealised,

especially against the grim reality of the ship (though Jodie Whittaker gives much heart). The trajectory of the disaster that awaits them is pretty signposted by introducing one character, literally, as a "psychopath", having him play with a knife and then – to really underline the point – casting Ben Mendelsohn. But the inevitability doesn't undermine the tension or emotion when Law's well-meaning promise – that everyone gets an equal share of the bounty – leads to brutal conflict.

Scoot McNairy – effectively playing the Paul Reiser part in *Aliens* – is becoming one of modern cinema's most reliable

NO.1
Black Sea is the first feature script from *Utopia* creator Dennis Kelly, who joined submariners' forums online as part of his research.

NO.2
Jude Law's Scottish accent is specific to a seafaring city: Aberdeen.

NO.3
The flashback scenes between Law and on-screen wife Jodie Whittaker were filmed in Cornwall with a skeleton crew prior to the main *Black Sea* shoot.

NO.4
Two of the cast – Grigory Dobrygin and Michael Smiley – are the sons of submariners.

pleasures (he somehow makes you care about a man who brings the *Financial Times* onto a submarine), along with Michael Smiley, while of the excellent Russian cast Grigory Dobrygin stands out as the glue trying to keep everyone together. And then there's Law, who delivers just the right blend of decency and desperation, an ordinary man driven to extreme depths.

From *Touching The Void* to this, Kevin Macdonald is a director at his best in desperate tales of survival.
NEV PIERCE

VERDICT
Though it perhaps inevitably lives in the shadow of some subgenre masterpieces, *Black Sea* is a superbly shot men-on-a-mission thriller with chest-tightening tension and a striking contemporary resonance. ★★★★

THE **EMPIRE** MOVIE GUIDE: UNMISSABLE ★★★★ EXCELLENT ★★★ GOOD ★★ POOR ★★ TRAGIC ★

IN CINEMAS



The battle for the picnic table was fierce.



TRAILER TIME!
Tap the play buttons to watch the trailers on this spread.

WYRMWOOD: ROAD OF THE DEAD

G'Day Of The Dead

RELEASED FEBRUARY 13

RATED MA15+

DIRECTOR Kiah Roache-Turner

SCREENWRITERS Kiah Roache-Turner, Tristan Roache-Turner

CAST Jay Gallagher, Bianca Bradley, Leon Burchill

RUNNING TIME 98 minutes

PLOT Barry (Gallagher) is not having a good time. His wife and child have been killed by zombies and his sister Brooke (Bradley) has been kidnapped by a demented doctor in a hellish lab. With fellow survivor Benny (Burchill) in tow, Barry hits the road to save her.

What is it about Aussie siblings and zombies flicks? In 2003 the Spierig twins started their career with the no-budget splatter of *Undead*, doing most of the post-production in their bedrooms. Now brothers Kiah and Tristan Roache-Turner are the new brains behind *Wyrmwood: Road Of The Dead*. Whether these fresh faces on the horror scene will push the boundaries of awesomeness with films like the Spierig's *Predestination* remains to be seen but, without doubt, *Wyrmwood: Road Of The Dead* is a fast and

furious ride down the terror tarmac. Full of delightfully ocker dialogue, a plot that never pauses to consider inconsistencies and a cast that attacks words and flesh with equal relish, *Wyrmwood* ensures a fun time is had by all.

With clever nods to George A. Romero's *Dead* flicks, Italian gut-munchers and a host of B-grade flesh feasts, the Roache-Turners prove they know their Fulcis from their Lenzis, but the duo still manage to add a couple of intriguing tweaks to zombie folklore. Telepathically controlled

zombies add frisson to the film's fiery finale and, best of all they discovery that highly flammable zombie blood can be used as fuel. *Mad Max* never had it this good.

Cheap as chips *Wyrmwood* may be – it's rough as eviscerated guts at times – but the walkabout dead shuffle on a bloody, entertaining canvas thanks to the brothers' ambitious scope, high-octane action and FX. **DAVID MICHAEL BROWN**

VERDICT

Infectious, gross and full of laughs, *Wyrmwood* is bloody good fun. ★★★★

THE GAMBLER

All bets are on

RELEASED OUT NOW

RATED MA15+

DIRECTOR Rupert Wyatt

SCREENWRITER William Monahan, James Toback

CAST Mark Wahlberg, Brie Larson, John Goodman, Jessica Lange

RUNNING TIME 111 minutes

PLOT English professor and so-so novelist Jim Bennett (Wahlberg) is a gambling addict. He has seven days to pay back \$240,000 to a casino boss. So he goes gambling, obviously.

taken the theme, if not the mood, of the 1974 original and created an enjoyable and slick update.

Wahlberg's casting as any kind of English professor may rank as the unlikeliest since John Wayne played Genghis Khan, but he makes a good fist of inhabiting a higher-minded intellectual life in tandem with his self-destructive gambling impulses. The actor has a track record at interpreting screenwriter William Monahan's smart, terse dialogue – think of Wahlberg's blistering turn in *The Departed* – and early doors, he has a terrific scene lecturing his wannabe writing students about the pitfalls of mediocrity ("If you are not a genius, don't bother"). But in the end, the character doesn't deepen or develop. Monahan also creates potentially interesting roles for Brie Larson (a grade-A student who falls in with



Goodman didn't take his Funky Bunch rejection well.

Wahlberg) and John Goodman (a bald loan shark), but the movie never really figures out what to do with them.

Wyatt's direction is brisk and efficient, with the odd moment of brilliance (time-lapse gambling) and a great ear for tuneage, ranging from Dylan, Chopin and Pulp to a terrific use of Dinah Washington's *This Bitter Earth*. He also gets effective atmosphere out of the unusual world of LA's Asian gambling dens. Yet what he

doesn't really do is inject Bennett's predicament with a sense of dread or feeling. BIG numbers count down the time to payback day but there is little in the way of tension or suspense. And, in the end, it's hard to connect with a smart man who time and again flushes easy get-outs down the toilet. **IAN FREER**

VERDICT

A rare grown-up thriller, full of interesting bits and a strong turn from Wahlberg. But, it doesn't grip as it might. ★★★★

A REMAKE OF KAREL REISZ'S

downbeat, under-the-radar '70s classic starring a post-*Godfather* James Caan, *The Gambler* is at heart about an intelligent man who can only feel alive by risking everything on an ill-considered punt. Director Rupert Wyatt and star Mark Wahlberg, a pair united by *Planet Of The Apes* re-dos, have

He rushed to be Firth in line.



KINGSMAN: THE SECRET SERVICE

The name's Bond. James Bond, innit

RELEASED OUT NOW

RATED TBC

DIRECTOR Matthew Vaughn

SCREENWRITERS Jane Goldman, Matthew Vaughn

CAST Colin Firth, Taron Egerton, Samuel L. Jackson, Michael Caine, Mark Strong, Sophie Cookson, Sofia Boutella

RUNNING TIME 129 minutes

PLOT Eggsy (Egerton), a troubled yoof, finds himself recruited by Harry Hart (Firth), a smooth spy for a covert agency called Kingsman. Meanwhile, an eccentric billionaire threatens to wipe out most of the world's population.

IT'S HARD TO ARGUE WITH A BILLION bucks at the box office, of course, but at the same time, it's hard not to feel that the Bournification of the James Bond franchise may have robbed 007 of his sense of fun. These days, the upper lip is so stiff that it's impossible for the old man to raise his eyebrow.

Which is where Matthew Vaughn's *Kingsman: The Secret Service* comes in. It's got ingenious gadgets, suave heroes with the ability to identify a rare brand of Scotch from smell alone,

megalomaniacal villains and deadly henchwomen with blades where their legs used to be. It's filthy, funny and very violent – and frankly, it's the most fun 007 has been in years.

But, of course, it's not Bond at all. It's Vaughn's tribute to spy movies, in much the same impish way that his *Kick-Ass* was a rocket-fuelled, foul-mouthed tip of the hat to superhero flicks. As such it wears its influences on its immaculately tailored sleeve. So Colin Firth's super-spy Harry Hart wears Harry Palmer specs, brandishes a John Steed umbrella, and has more than a touch of Solo (Napoleon, not Han) about him. But it's Bond's shadow that looms largest over the movie, with Ian Fleming's creation regularly name-checked in an oh-so-postmodern way.

Vaughn, though, is a cultural magpie, and the film doffs its trilby to other inspirations, from *Trading Places* and *My Fair Lady* to *Men In Black*, as Harry takes Eggsy (Taron Egerton) under his wing and teaches him to become a

gentleman and a killer. *Full Metal Smoking Jacket*, if you will.

When the mentor/mentee duo are together, in slyly written takes on Bond staples like the Q scene, their chemistry fairly crackles. Firth, in particular, is clearly having the time of his life with the deadpan-but-warm Harry, while newcomer Egerton, bringing charm to Eggsy's rough edges, is clearly the latest off the Vaughn conveyor belt of new talent that has disgorged the likes of Chloë Grace Moretz and Sienna Miller.

However, the film strains to keep them apart – Harry during his investigation of Samuel L. Jackson's lisping villain, and Eggsy in a fairly rote training section. In fact, apart from a few F-bombs and an early scene in which Harry teaches a pub full of hooligans some manners, the first hour is all a little conventional, even a little tame. Where, you might ask, is the Vaughn who unleashed Hit-Girl upon an unsuspecting public?

And then he shows up, firstly with a sustained, supercharged melee – scored, memorably, to the

wailing guitar solo of Lynyrd Skynyrd's *Free Bird* – in which Firth shoots, stabs, impales, strangles, explodes and immolates a whole bunch of people in a way that would make Bridget Jones soil her massive pants. Exhilarating, morally dubious and exhausting, it pitches the film headfirst into its utterly demented third act. Here the 007 is cranked all the way up to 0011, including an outrageous and, potentially for some, offensive riff on the coy double entendres of that series' codas ("He's attempting re-entry, sir"). It all culminates in an audacious and gloriously OTT visual conceit that you simply won't have seen before in a mainstream movie. And how often can you say that? Talk about keeping the British end up.

CHRIS HEWITT

VERDICT
Perhaps the riskiest mainstream movie in years, Vaughn's love letter to spy films may be uneven in places, but it's ultra-violent, envelope-pushing and fun enough to overcome the flaws. Bond with the stabilisers taken off. ★★★★

Rate this month's movies with *viewa*. Scan this page!

THAT SUGAR FILM

Sweet enough

RELEASED MARCH 1

RATED PG

DIRECTOR/SCREENWRITER

Damon Gameau

CAST Damon Gameau, Zoe Tuckwell-Smith, Hugh Jackman, Stephen Fry, Isabelle Lucas

RUNNING TIME 97 minutes

PLOT Actor Damon Gameau sacrifices his own health on a 60 day experiment eating the average person's daily sugar load – 40 teaspoons – from foods typically deemed healthy. On a broader scale, Gameau explores the impact of sugar on our daily lives.

IF A HEALTHY, LEAN MAN – LONG SANS refined sugar – puts himself on a high sugar diet, the results are bound to be shocking. Does that make it a gimmick? But unlike Morgan Spurlock's 2004 all-McDonalds diet experiment *Super Size Me*, Australian actor-turned-

guineapig Damon Gameau's colourful 60-day adventure into saccharine masochism comes with a major twist. No junk food or soft drinks allowed, only perceived 'healthy' products containing 'hidden' sugars – muesli bars, low-fat yoghurts, juices, baked beans etc. The fast pace in which Gameau's overall health deteriorates is alarming – the rapid weight gain, the rapid development of fatty liver disease. But Gameau also shows that these effects can be reversed.

Some will accuse Gameau's documentary of demonising sugar or at least showing a clear bias. Having an anti-sugar campaigner on your specialist team overseeing the experiment for example, or a sequence where Gameau conjures up the Marlboro Man with his carton of 'Fructo Sticks'. It's clearly satirical but provocative too,



TRAILER TIME!

Tap the play buttons to watch trailers for all the films on this spread.

Size didn't matter on the *Ant-Man* porn parody set.

intended to give pause to the power behind the \$50 billion a year global sugar trade.

Gameau is an engaging, vanity-free host, his film very much in the Morgan Spurlock mould. It's filmmaker as subject, with actress partner Zoe Tuckwell-Smith a frequent presence, her pregnancy a major motivation behind embarking on the experiment.

Whimsical in style with impressive animations to match – a shrinked Gameau jockeys a fat globule inside Brenton Thwaites's ripped torso – and Gameau has secured some high profile talent in

Stephen Fry and Hugh Jackman to convey his message.

Some elements like Gameau's concluding rap as pimped up Sugar Man may seem overplayed but they'll appeal to kids, a target audience. It's part of a healthy food education movement. And that's no bad thing. **JIM MITCHELL**

===== VERDICT =====

Despite some gimmickry, Gameau's colourful sugar gauntlet meets its aim as an entertainingly creative, educational journey. Shocking and provocative, it'll make you think twice about sugar.

★★★★★

THE INTERVIEW

Korea opportunities

RELEASED FEBRUARY 12

RATED MA15+

DIRECTORS Evan Goldberg, Seth Rogen
SCREENWRITER Dan Sterling

CAST Seth Rogen, James Franco, Randall Park, Diana Bang, Lizzy Caplan, Timothy Simons

RUNNING TIME 112 minutes

PLOT A dim-witted television host (Franco) and his loyal producer (Rogen) are enlisted by the CIA to assassinate Kim Jong-un (Park) after being invited to conduct a primetime interview with the North Korean leader himself.

WITH ITS THEATRICAL RELEASE BESET BY A widely publicised bout of cyber-hacking, everything about *The Interview* short of the film itself suggests a sharp satire of hollow entertainment journalism and headstrong American imperialism. Never mind that Trey Parker and Matt Stone already had their way

with Kim Jong-il and half of Hollywood with 2004's *Team America: World Police*; Rogen, Franco and company are perfectly comfortable with rehashing references to *The Lord Of The Rings* and unwelcome anal penetration, thank you very much.

Co-directing Canadians Rogen and Evan Goldberg had an easier time convincing us that a party filled with self-mocking movie stars faced the full-on Apocalypse in 2013's *This Is The End* than they do here. Once our boys do come to know insecure Kim, the bromance routine of late sets in, with this film's third wheel of choice just happening to be the heir to real-world totalitarianism.

However, no matter how old-hat or gross-out the gags get, the two leads still get a fair amount of mileage out of their own reliably irreverent chemistry. As producer



"Snap!"

Aaron Rapaport, Rogen gives good worrywart while Franco mugs his way through most exchanges as the vapid tabloid show host Dave Skylark. Lizzy Caplan is (as a CIA handler) often relegated to rolling her eyes from a Langley control centre. Stealing the show out from under its stars are Park and Diana Bang, who plays Sook, Kim's designated liaison to the visiting Americans. Both actors land plenty of laughs, but more impressive is their ability to find sympathetic

angles from potential caricatures, and the film is funnier between the innuendo and cheerful outbursts of violence for it. **WILLIAM GOSS**

===== VERDICT =====

Considering how its inflammatory ambition and scattershot execution put it closer to *Spies Like Us* than *The Great Dictator* on the political comedy spectrum, *The Interview* should ultimately stand as the boastfully juvenile lightning rod that modern American culture deserved – no butts about it. ★★★★☆

The Come As Your Favourite *GoodFella* party was in full swing.



A MOST VIOLENT YEAR

Oil Gangs Of New York

RELEASED FEBRUARY 26

RATED MA15+

DIRECTOR/SCREENWRITER

J.C. Chandor

CAST Oscar Isaac, Jessica Chastain, David Oyelowo, Alessandro Nivola

RUNNING TIME 125 minutes

PLOT Ambitious Latin-American immigrant and self-made businessman Abel Morales (Isaac) and his stylish, steely wife Anna (Chastain) risk everything on a deal that will make or break them, just as thieves, gangsters and corruption on all sides converge to drag Abel down.

family and burning desire to achieve the fabled American Dream legitimately.

The year is 1981, and New York is experiencing a historic peak in violent crimes, along with extremes of weather. Oscar Isaac's Abel Morales sells heating oil, one of several independents who buy from the big boys and sell directly to householders in the New York boroughs. An opportunity to buy land with perfect potential for his operation's expansion is grasped. It's a bold move that could take Morales from successful family businessman to empire builder, but the decision is made and the non-refundable deposit gambled just when Morales finds himself beset all at once from every direction. His truck drivers are targeted by armed robbers in a series of heists, his salesmen brutally beaten, his bank, the union, mobsters and the law are all giving him grief, and a shadowy nemesis is up to no good at the Morales's new showcase home. Miraculously Abel's beautiful camel coat remains pristine through breakneck pursuits and danger-dodging, but whether he

can keep his hands clean when the ladder for the upwardly mobile proves very greasy keeps you guessing.

Chandor is versed in the crime classics and this has knowing echoes of *The Godfather*, *Scarface* and, particularly, Sidney Lumet's New York chronicles *Serpico* and *Dog Day Afternoon*. The central character is singular, an honourable man who prides himself on his social advancement by using his hard work and charm, having spent his whole life trying not to be a gangster. This essentially decent guy has to ask himself how much he is willing to compromise to keep what he has earned.

Isaac and Chastain really take the breath away as a comely screen couple. Their suburban-chic lifestyle (three daughters and a dog), their chemistry and quarrels are believable in every detail. He, immaculately tailored and looking more than ever like the young Pacino, is strikingly intelligent and sympathetically conflicted. The daughter of a cheap Brooklyn gangster, she is the polished, sexy, supportive soulmate until her

lineage shockingly tells in her increasingly assertive Lady Macbeth-in-Armani. "You're not gonna like what happens once I get involved," she promises, and it's no idle threat. Albert Brooks, as Abel's lawyer and counsellor, Alessandro Nivola as a deceptively cordial, high-end competitor and David Oyelowo as the persistent Assistant District Attorney focusing his ill-timed attentions on Morales are all good. The most arresting supporting role, though, should be a breakthrough for the British Elyes Gabel (ex-*Casualty* and *Game Of Thrones*' Dothraki bloodrider Rakharo) as hapless Julian, Abel's most loyal, admiring and aspirational truck driver, terrorised into a tragic sequence of events in this startlingly gripping, beautifully dressed and shot moral maze.

ANGIE ERRIGO

VERDICT
Stylish, sophisticated, simmering crime and character drama with Shakespearean dimension and bravura performances from all involved. Who knew heating oil could be a sexy subject?

★★★★★

Rate this month's movies with *viewa*. Scan this page!



KING VISION!
Tap the play buttons
to see trailers for
the movies on this
spread!

SELMA

History repeating

That's "O"
for Oscar.

RELEASED FEBRUARY 12

RATED M

DIRECTOR Ava DuVernay

SCREENWRITER Paul Webb

CAST David Oyelowo, Tom Wilkinson, Carmen Ejogo, Tim Roth, Oprah Winfrey

RUNNING TIME 127 minutes

PLOT It is 1965. Selma, a small town in Alabama, becomes the focal point of a march by black civil rights activists, led by Dr Martin Luther King Jr (Oyelowo), that meets bloody resistance at the hands of local authorities. At stake is the right to vote for African-Americans – something that could change the course of history.

IF YOU'VE PAID EVEN SCANT ATTENTION to news from the USA of late, there are images in *Selma*, Ava DuVernay's powerful depiction of the peace march that did so much to advance civil rights in the 1960s, that could have come straight from Ferguson or mobile phone footage that captured Eric Garner's horrific death. At one point, a young black man is shot at point-blank range by a white cop, while later on another bigot with a badge exercises the

sort of chokehold that recalls Garner's real-life, tragic cry of, "I can't breathe." These sequences make for deeply uncomfortable viewing, not just because they're raw and violent images, but because they suggest that in 50 years, we may have come so far, but there's still quite a way to go.

Yet *Selma* is not a film made to score political points. Instead, it shows precisely just how far America has come in addressing the egregious injustices meted out to African-Americans in the '60s; it exists to celebrate the strides taken by the likes of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and his supporters, and lament their sacrifices, and it is, despite some notable flaws, a deeply affecting, sometimes horrifying, ultimately inspirational movie. Those flaws can partially be attributed to the threadbare budget – a dramatic cast-of-thousands moment should be stirring, but is marred by dodgy CG – but it's also shot and staged, for the most part, in a rather plodding, perfunctory manner. Yet directing isn't just confined to knowing how

to move a camera. In DuVernay, *Selma* has one heck of an actor's director, and in David Oyelowo's lead performance, she has cultivated a possible Oscar-winner and a performance for the ages.

Selma chooses to focus on one of the most important fights of King's life, but it is not an MLK biopic – we meet the good doctor after his "I have a dream" speech and we leave him before his assassination in Memphis in 1968 – but King, as you might expect, dominates proceedings. Oyelowo, his rich English accent completely subsumed by an uncanny approximation of Dr. King's mellifluous tones, is utterly convincing throughout, both in scenes where he unites crowds with his gripping oratory, and quieter moments where we see the man's fragility. One scene, where he comforts the bewildered, recently bereaved elderly father, will tear your heart out. It may not quite be a warts-and-all look at King, as Paul Greengrass's oft-mooted and currently in-limbo *Memphis* might have been, but it acknowledges his

infidelities and his occasional helplessness in the face of such overwhelming odds, and should be applauded for that at least.

Oyelowo is backed by a rich supporting cast, including executive producer Oprah Winfrey, dignified in the opening scene where she is denied the right to vote by a racist bureaucrat, while the Brit duo of Tom Wilkinson, as Lyndon B. Johnson, and Tim Roth, as Alabama governor George Wallace, also do fine work. There has been some controversy in the States about how the film turns a blind eye to LBJ's commendable contribution to the civil rights movement, but Wilkinson nails the man's essential dignity, while Roth has fun turning Wallace into a hissable panto villain. But it's Oyelowo's film, and when he's not on screen, the film's urgent march notably stalls. **CHRIS HEWITT**

VERDICT
It's not a perfect film, by any means, but it's incredibly powerful and often moving, anchored by an awards-worthy performance from Oyelowo. ★★★★★

ROSEWATER

Persian engulf

RELEASED February 19

RATED TBC

DIRECTOR/SCREENWRITER

Jon Stewart

STARRING Gael García Bernal, Kim Bodnia, Dimitri Leonidas

RUNNING TIME 103 minutes

PLOT Iranian journalist Maziar Bahari (Bernal) returns to his homeland, to cover the 2009 elections. Providing footage of a violent protest to foreign media, Bahari is swiftly arrested and imprisoned. Accused of traitorous espionage, Bahari is isolated, harassed and tortured.

THE DAILY SHOW ANCHOR JON STEWART admits to a considered sense of responsibility for many events he depicts throughout *Rosewater*, his directorial debut. Segments from his show that journalist Maziar Bahari appeared in were used by Iranian interrogators as "evidence"

of Bahari being a US spy. But *Rosewater* – based on Bahari's book, about his 118-day ordeal – isn't a sickly shot at soothing Stewart's conscience. It's a well-mounted, targeted testimony to oppression and censorship not having the last word.

Bahari's predicament isn't the fault of Stewart. Nor is it due to Bahari's copies of *Empire*, which his captors suggest are "porno". Without hysterical finger-pointing, *Rosewater* chastises those in Iran's ruthless leadership – just by placing us in Bahari's cell. The outrage of an innocent person being forced to confess falsified crimes is firmly filtered through the absurdity, pain, terror and banality of Bahari's treatment.

Before #jesuischarlie, detained Bahari provoked an international outcry against those who violently object to freedom of speech. Not



Damn wall magnets.

that Bahari knew this at the time; *Rosewater* confines us to the endless vacuum of uncertainty the journalist experienced. Stewart deftly provides history lessons and political pulse-taking, yet rather than an Iranian social study, we're witnessing one man's struggle to survive.

As the confused, self-effacing reporter, Bernal is laudably credible and un-superheroic. Similarly, and despite Stewart's close working relationship with Bahari, the latter isn't deified. While the intentional tedium and repetition of "Being Maziar Bahari" can elicit boredom, resistance to injustice does contrast potently

with pronounced weakness and despondency.

Rosewater is made for those who already support its undercurrents, but that "the enemy" is humanised deserves special mention. Kim Bodnia is repulsive AND sympathetic as Bahari's chief interrogator, a loyal "soldier" desperate to do his job well. Fanning the flame of freedom does not have to deny a voice to those who would snuff it out.

BEN McEACHEN

VERDICT

Stewart proves to be an assured helmsman, turning narrow focus upon injustice into worthwhile protest. ★★★★



THE WEDDING RINGER

RELEASED OUT NOW RATED MA15+ DIRECTOR Jeremy Garelick

CAST Kevin Hart, Josh Gad, Kaley Cuoco-Sweeting, Jorge Garcia, Affion Crockett

THIS HART VEHICLE CASHES IN ON THE WEDDING-comedy-that-fellas-can-enjoy genre with an unlikely plot that sees hapless, male friend deficient Doug (Gad) engaged to Gretchen (Cuoco-Sweeting) reduced to a slow-burn Bridezilla and in desperate need of groomsmen. Enter Jimmy Callahan (the excitable Hart), best man-for-hire and then some. Outrageous follies follow – some genuinely funny, some plain crass (it's hard to laugh at a burning nanna). An awkward mix of gross-out comedy and sentimentality.

JIM MITCHELL ★★★★



WHAT WE DID ON OUR HOLIDAY

RELEASED FEBRUARY 12 RATED PG DIRECTORS Guy

Jenkin, Andy Hamilton CAST Rosamund Pike, David Tennant, Ben Presley, Billy Connolly, Celia Imrie

THIS IS A CUTE, GENTLY ARCH COMEDY ABOUT A splintering couple (Rosamund Pike and David Tennant) taking their three children to their grandad's (Billy Connolly) birthday party and trying not to let on that they're divorcing. Mostly it's hugely likable, with particularly good scenes between the kids and Connolly, but there is a pivotal event that is just too dark to be casually giggled off. It finds its way back for a satisfying ending, but in the middle there, it gets weird.

OLLY RICHARDS ★★★★★



CITIZENFOUR

RELEASED FEBRUARY 12 RATED M DIRECTOR

Laura Poitras CAST Edward Snowden, Glenn Greenwald, Laura Poitras, Jacob Appelbaum, Julian Assange

THE DEFINITIVE 21ST CENTURY DOCUMENTARY: A global tech conspiracy, leaked in real-time by its source, with an aftershock that absorbs the filmmaker into part of the story. Bunkered down in a Hong Kong hotel, Poitras records a stoic, paranoid Edward Snowden as he blows the whistle on the NSA's planet-wide surveillance. Director Poitras cuts through the baffling, abstract magnitude of the NSA's spying to deliver a stark warning of the West's vanishing freedoms. Tonally, it's an eerie film of cold anxiety rather than tension.

SIMON CROOK ★★★★★

Rate this month's movies with *viewa*. Scan this page! 

SUBSCRIBE YOUR

12 MONTHS FOR \$69.95

OR

**Save
35%
OFF
RRP FOR
12 ISSUES**

RRP FOR
12 ISSUES

A large, bold red title 'EMPIRE' is at the bottom. Above it, a circular badge on the left contains the text 'OFF' in large red letters, 'RRP FOR' in smaller red letters, and '12 ISSUES' in white letters. To the right of the badge, the text 'THE FORCE AWAKENS 88 THINGS WE'VE DISCOVERED' is in large black letters. In the center, there is a black and white portrait of Rey from Star Wars: The Force Awakens, looking directly at the viewer. The background is a dark teal color.

MAD MAX FURY ROAD

TOM HARDY REBOOTS
THE CARMAGEDDON!

— THE —
50
BEST FILMS OF 2014
WHAT'S N°1?

FREE POSTERS BIRDMAN + TERMINATOR GENISYS



**SUBSCRIBE
TO EMPIRE
NOW!**

→ **WWW.MAGSHOP.COM.AU/EMPIRE**
→ **OR PHONE: 136 116 AND QUOTE M1503EMP**

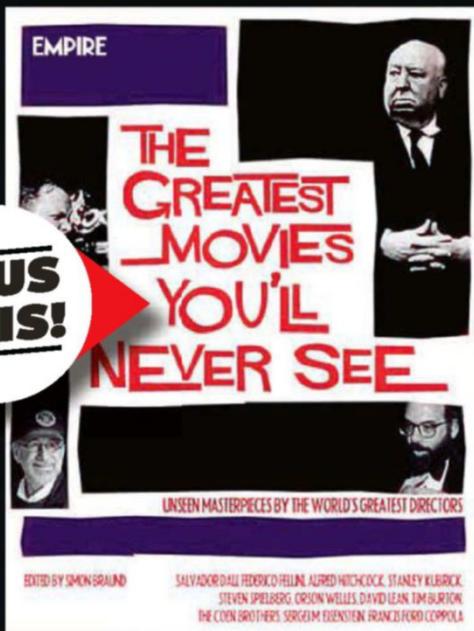
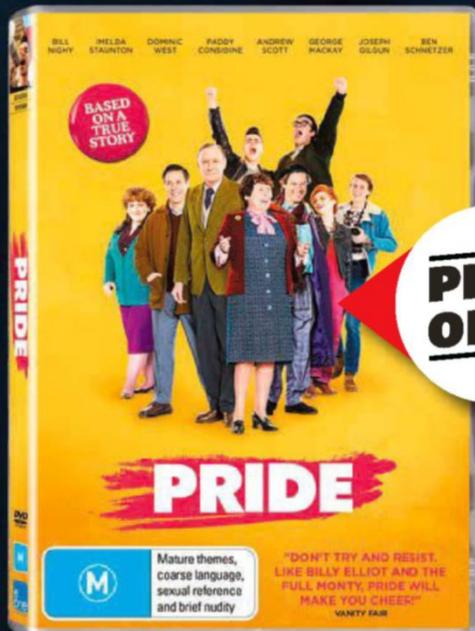
TERMS AND CONDITIONS: This offer expires at 11:59pm on 8 March 2015 and is available to subscribers within Australia only. This offer excludes *Empire* special editions and one shots. Please allow six to eight weeks for delivery of your first issue. For full terms and conditions, see www.magshop.com.au/empire.

WAY, TODAY!

24 MONTHS FOR \$149.95



SUBSCRIBE TO **EMPIRE** FOR 24 MONTHS AND YOU'LL RECEIVE YOUR CHOICE OF **PRIDE** OR **SON OF A GUN** ON DVD, A COPY OF **EMPIRE'S THE GREATEST MOVIES YOU'LL NEVER SEE** + AN **EMPIRE** CAP!



PRIDE tells the incredible true story of a Welsh mining community struggling to make ends meet during the 1984 miners' strike, when hope arrives with the unlikeliest of allies – a group of gay and lesbian activists who decide to raise money for the miners. A rousing, funny, affecting crowd-pleaser in the spirit of *Billy Elliot* and *The Full Monty*. RRP \$34.95

SON OF A GUN is a smart, edge-of-your-seat heist thriller starring Ewan McGregor (*Trainspotting*, *The Impossible*) and Brenton Thwaites (*Maleficent*). The assured debut feature of Australian director Julius Avery (*Jerrycan*), this taut psychological thriller, both artful and laced with action, palpably gets under your skin. RRP \$24.95

THE GREATEST MOVIES YOU'LL NEVER SEE by *Empire* contributor Simon Braund is filled with juicy histories of disastrous productions by masters – including Alfred Hitchcock, Steven Spielberg, Ridley Scott and many more – that never made it to a screen. A must-read for serious movie lovers. RRP \$39.95

ALREADY A SUBSCRIBER? SIMPLY EXTEND YOUR SUBSCRIPTION TO RECEIVE THIS OFFER!

PLUS CAP!



Please see page eight for our Privacy Notice. If you do not want your information provided to any organisation not associated with this offer, please indicate this clearly at the point of purchase or notify the Promoter in writing.



<https://www.facebook.com/eOneANZ>

e
one
entertainmentone

MISSEMP

Earn

FREE MAGAZINES!

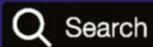
with the Reader Rewards loyalty app



CHOOSE
FROM
OVER
60
TITLES!

**BUY 8 MAGAZINES,
GET YOUR 9th FREE!**

Get the app. Get the rewards.



Search

Reader Rewards



Download on the
App Store



Google play

For a list of magazines and newsagents visit www.readerrewards.com.au

Apple and the Apple logo are trademarks of Apple Inc., registered in the U.S. and other countries. App Store is a service mark of Apple Inc. Google Play is a trademark of Google Inc.



200

MOVIES TO WATCH IN 2015

SURE, 2014 WAS *O-O-OKAY* MOVIES-WISE. THIS YEAR?
THE BLOCKBUSTERS ARE BIGGER, BRAINIER, BRAWNIER
AND – BLESS IT! – FROM A GALAXY FAR, FAR AWAY...
EMPIRE PREVIEWS 'EM ALL!



01 OUT NOW
CLASS

W
A
R

KINGSMAN: THE SECRET SERVICE
IS NOT JUST 'KICK-ASS MEETS
BOND', DIRECTOR MATTHEW
VAUGHN TELLS US. IT'S ALSO HIS
MOST PERSONAL MOVIE YET...

WORDS CHRIS HEWITT





WELCOME TO THE BOND VILLAIN'S LAIR!"

Matthew Vaughn is standing at the door to his home, and grinning widely. Largely because he's not kidding. Unless you are an actual Bond villain who just happens to be reading this, Vaughn's home is something else. It's a vast country pile, a Grade I listed building constructed in 1574, tucked away at the end of a driveway behind forbidding iron gates in Suffolk, all the better to afford Vaughn and his wife, Claudia Schiffer (you may have heard of her), some privacy.

Today *Empire* has arranged to spend the afternoon in Vaughn's entertaining company. From a cavernous entrance hall, he leads us into a dining room dominated by a colossal rectangular dining table. Two places are set for lunch — at either end of the table, roughly 20 feet apart. "Welcome to the Bond villain's fucking dining table!" cackles Vaughn. "I wanted to greet you in that chair stroking a white fucking cat. But I couldn't find the cat. It's around here somewhere..."

He's joking, of course. But there is a reason why Vaughn has mentioned 007 twice within minutes of our arrival (even if he compares himself to a villain; once a film producer, it seems, always a film producer). Bond is always on his mind. He grew up loving the character, loving the franchise. In 2006, as he revealed to *Empire* a few months ago, he came within a whisker of rebooting the superspy franchise, believing for 24 hours that he'd been given the job of directing *Casino Royale*. "There are two franchises that I would do — meaning other people's," he says. "Star Wars? I'm in. And the only other franchise, which I would have

done before this, was Bond. I would have loved to have done Bond."

And so he has. Kinda. With his fifth film as director, *Kingsman: The Secret Service*, in which a gentleman spy (Colin Firth) recruits a rough diamond (Taron Egerton) from the streets, Vaughn has written a virtual love letter to John Steed. And Harry Palmer. And Napoleon Solo. And Derek Flint. And Jason King. But mainly it's a love letter to 007.

"NO, THERE HADN'T

been the slightest interest," says Firth. Given he's tall, athletic, good-looking and the very epitome of an upper-class Brit, *Empire* has been wondering aloud if Bond ever came Firth's way. He shakes his head. "I met one of the directors a long time ago, around the time it ended up with Dalton," he admits. "But I never felt that there was serious interest. I honestly do not know what I would have done had it ever come my way."

Kingsman gives us some indication. As seriously suave agent Harry Hart, Firth is a hoot, deploying that cut-glass, upper-class accent to great deadpan use and indulging in the sort of ultra-violent behaviour you imagine would appall King George VI or Mr. Darcy, but secretly get a (v.g.) from Bridget Jones. "I think Daniel Craig is absolutely brilliant," he says. "But he's probably as far from camp as it's ever got. I think I've brought it back the other way. I've probably got a bit more Roger Moore in me than Daniel Craig. Although I can't do the eyebrow lift."

There's no need when Vaughn has made a film that lifts its own eyebrow. *Kingsman* is not a Bond spoof ("It's not annihilating the

FEBRUARY 5
02 THE GAMBLER
DIR Rupert Wyatt **CAST** Mark Wahlberg, Jessica Lange, John Goodman, Brie Larson
Remake of Karel Reisz's 1974 film of the same name with Wahlberg taking James Caan's role of an English professor playing a dicey game in the wake of spiralling Blackjack debts.

03 ME, MYSELF AND MUM
DIR Guillaume Gallienne **CAST** Guillaume Gallienne, Diane Kruger French actor Gallienne adapts his solo stage show where he played himself as a youngster and his hot-cold mother, in this Cannes-winning coming out comedy where the protagonist is the only one in the dark.

FEBRUARY 12
04 CITIZENFOUR
DIR Laura Poitras **CAST** Edward Snowden, Laura Poitras Poitras puts herself in the picture in this doco on infamous whistle-blower Edward Snowden which promises tense encounters in a part character study, part real life thriller. Executive produced by Steven Soderbergh.

05 THE INTERVIEW
DIRS Evan Goldberg, Seth Rogen **CAST** Seth Rogen, James Franco, Randall Park
Rogen and Goldberg may have started World War III with this comedy about two journoes assigned to kill Kim Jong-il. Whee!

06 WHAT WE DID ON OUR HOLIDAY
DIRS Andy Hamilton, Guy Jenkin **CAST** Rosamund Pike, David Tennant, Billy Connolly
The creators of *Outnumbered* keep it in the family with this comedy about a soon-to-be-divorced couple (Tennant, Pike) trying to keep the approaching de-hitching schtum on a Scottish Highlands family holiday.



Project Almanac.

07 SELMA
DIR Ava DuVernay **CAST** David Oyelowo, Giovanni Ribisi

Oyelowo (*The Butler*) stars as Martin Luther King leading the civil rights marches of 1965 from Selma, Dallas to Montgomery, rural Alabama. From co-producer Oprah Winfrey.

FEBRUARY 19
08 ROSEWATER

DIR Jon Stewart **CAST** Gael García Bernal, Kim Bodnia, Shohreh Aghdashloo Sharp news satirist Jon Stewart turns serious with this directorial debut, an account of Canadian Iranian journo Maziar Bahari's (Bernal) wrongful incarceration for treason during Iran's elections in 2009. Looks like another hard-hitting inspirathon.

FEBRUARY 26
09 A MOST VIOLENT YEAR

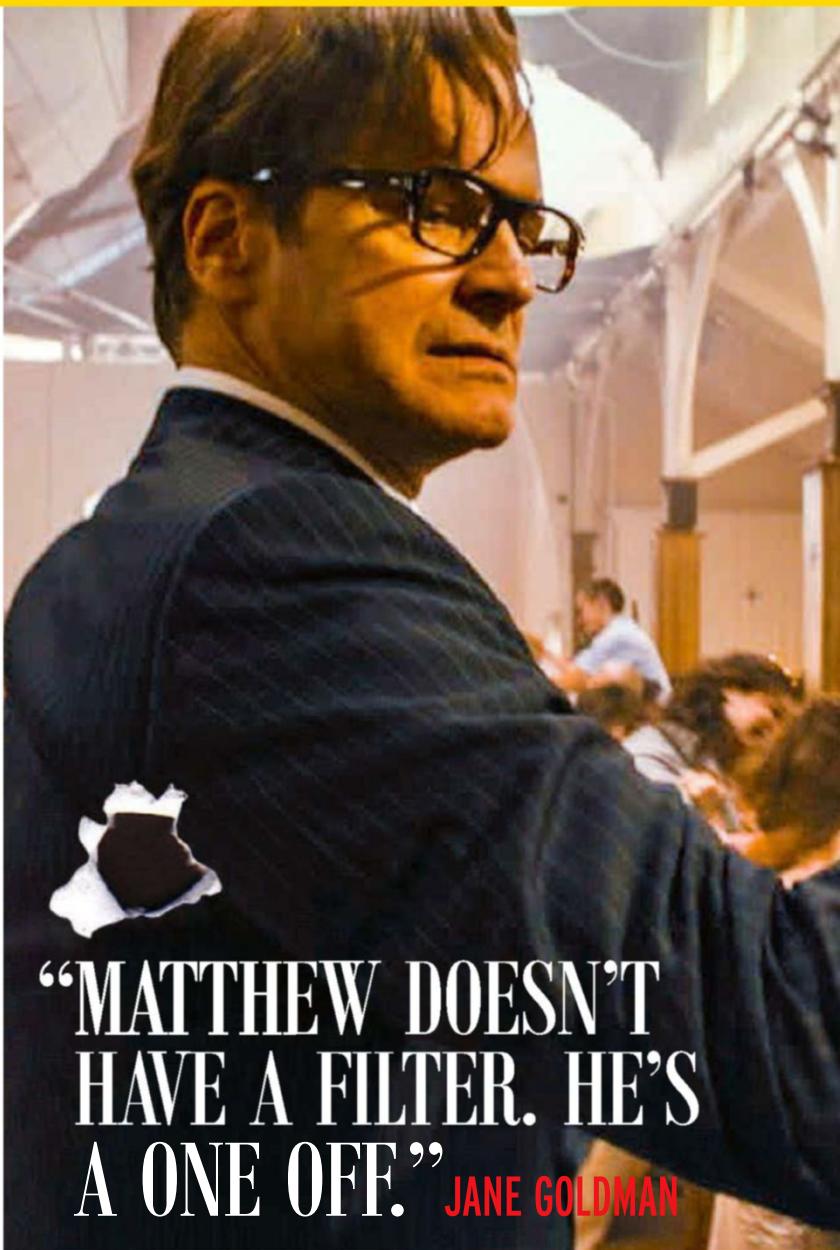
DIR J.C. Chandor **CAST** Oscar Isaac, Jessica Chastain, David Oyelowo It's the American dream writ large and dangerous in this compelling crime drama from writer/director Chandor (*Margin Call*, *All Is Lost*). Set in New York City, 1981, Isaac and Chastain are blisteringly authentic as a couple hell-bent on realising their lofty ambition.

10 EASTERN BOYS

DIR Robin Campillo **CAST** Olivier Rabourdin, Kirill Emelyanov Boundary pushing director Campillo returns with this downward-spiral of a middle aged Parisian after he becomes involved with a teen hustler.

11 PROJECT ALMANAC

DIR Dean Israelite **CAST** Jonny Weston, Sofia Black-D'Elia, Michelle DeFraites Teen found footage thriller in which tampering with a temporal relocation prototype (that's a time machine) causes a ripple effect of exciting and chilling proportions.



“MATTHEW DOESN’T HAVE A FILTER. HE’S A ONE OFF.” **JANE GOLDMAN**

kind of thing it’s satirising,” says Firth), but it is very much to spy movies what Vaughn’s *Kick-Ass* was to superhero films. It nods and winks and openly references Bond, while going to places those movies always feared to tread. There are two sequences in *Kingsman* that are so gloriously OTT and so spectacularly violent that the Broccolis would blanch. One, a thrilling shoot-out that comes on like *The Raid* meets Peter Jackson’s *Braindead*, in which Firth racks up a body count to rival Arnie’s career best, gave the actor pause. “I’m still processing my response,” he admits. “I did think, ‘I don’t know what I’m getting into now.’ And there will be arguments, legitimate discussions, about whether it’s healthy to enjoy anything with violence. Particularly when you’re dared to enjoy it. I still don’t have the answers on what’s supposed to be good and bad. But I was exhilarated as well.”

The other, an audacious sequence we’ll refer to by Vaughn’s description — “a Busby Berkeley fireworks display” — has to be seen to be believed. And its very presence goes a long way to explaining why *Empire* is in Vaughn’s dining room talking about *Kingsman* and not *X-Men: Days Of Future Past*.

That was the movie Vaughn had been all set to make, following on from his success rebooting the X-movies with *First Class* back in 2011. But when plans to make *Kingsman*, an original property Vaughn had cooked up with his old friend, comic book writer Mark Millar, accelerated because a couple of copycat properties were being hawked around Hollywood, Vaughn had a decision to make. “I thought, ‘Hold on, if I do another *X-Men*, I’ll be in that camp of being a director for hire.’ Yeah, I’ll make money, but that doesn’t really interest me. And *Kingsman* was in my head.”



Colin Firth channels a specky 007 as secret agent Harry Hart.

So for the third time in his short directorial career, he walked away from a big studio movie to do his own thing. And, as with the other times, he's taken a risk that could well end up costing him everything.

THE SECOND occasion came in 2009, when he left Marvel's *Thor* during the development stage. His version was very different from the Kenneth Branagh movie that emerged in 2011: "It was about Vikings," he reveals. "I wanted *Thor* to be gritty and real, and when you go to Asgard the whole thing is motion-captured and the fucking craziest world you've ever seen." But the parting of ways with Marvel and their chief, Kevin Feige ("a great guy"), was amicable. A far cry from the first occasion, then.

That had been in 2005 when, during pre-production on what would become the third *X-Men*

movie, *The Last Stand*, Vaughn walked off the 20th Century Fox production just a couple of months before filming. It was a project he'd always had reservations about — when he was mulling over the offer to direct, he'd called *Empire*, among others, to seek advice — but having successfully transitioned from producing Guy Ritchie movies to directing his own with *Layer Cake*, he decided it was worth the risk. Initially, at least.

"When I joined *X3*, there was no script," he recalls. "I went off with Zak Penn and Simon Kinberg and wrote a script in six days. I needed a script. And then I went into a person's office — I can't say who — and saw another draft of *X3*. I said, 'What's that?' and grabbed it. It was another script, and the opening scene was Storm in Africa causing rain to get rid of the drought. I was so freaked out. I made my decision then and there, booked my flight

Taron Egerton's Eggsy tries to survive the agency's training regime.



200
MOVIES TO WATCH
IN 2015



Sofia Boutella as Gazelle, Valentine's bionic-legged henchwoman.



Eggsy and Harry Hart unlock secrets.

and went home."

Back home in Suffolk, Vaughn was barracked by furious calls from Fox, threatening to sue ("I hadn't signed a contract, so I could leave") and from his then-agent, informing him that the old cliché was true: he really would never work in Hollywood again.

Vaughn, though, is a fascinating creature. Although he comes from an aristocratic background (his father, George de Vere Drummond, is the godson of King George VI — another Colin Firth connection), with a private education and an ample bank account, there's more to his story than meets the eye. He's

actually a self-made man, independently wealthy, and very much the product of his mother, Kathy Ceaton, who raised him as a single parent during the '70s and who, sadly, passed away suddenly last year while Vaughn was prepping *Kingsman*.

As a result, this hyper-violent, slickly stylish action movie is also his most personal. "My mother tried to bring me up to be Harry," he says. "There's so much of my mother in this movie. She hated most of my movies! But I thought she would quite like this one." He pauses, and laughs. "No, there's violence and swearing in it, so she wouldn't have."

Matthew Vaughn on set with
Colin Firth, Samuel L. Jackson
and Sofia Boutella.

“IF BEING PASSIONATE AND OPINIONATED
IS DIFFICULT – THEN YES, I AM.” **MATTHEW VAUGHN**

VAUGHN HAS

dedicated the movie to Ceaton, with a title card that goes beyond ‘in loving memory’. His fiercely independent streak, it seems, comes from her, the same streak that led him to react to the post-*X3* threat of a Hollywood blackballing by co-funding his next movie, *Stardust*, in 2007. “He’s uniquely unbothered by what other people think,” laughs Jane Goldman, who’s been his writing partner since that film. “He doesn’t have a filter — in a charming way. He’s incredibly open about saying what he feels. He’s such a complete one-off.”

When he walked away from *Thor*, he moved on to *Kick-Ass*, privately funding the film “out of ‘fuck you’” when every studio in Hollywood turned it down. “I mortgaged the house,” he says matter-of-factly, reclining in his study. “There was a moment where we were fucked on *Kick-Ass*. I’d have lost this house. I’d be proper fucked, as they say in *Snatch*. It was really scary. My heart literally went up a bit just remembering that.”

Nevertheless, he’s done it again on *Kingsman*. “Listen, I didn’t get proper fucked!” he laughs. “Actually, it paid off. I got fucked in a good



Mark Strong's Merlin:
trainer of superspies.



Michael Caine's
snappily dressed
veteran agent, Arthur.

way!” It’s another huge gamble — in the grand tradition of his real hero, George Lucas, *Kingsman* is a Fox film, but the studio is merely distributing, which allowed him to turn down its more interesting notes, which included redubbing Samuel L. Jackson’s lisping performance as bad guy Richmond Valentine, and losing central set-pieces, Busby Berkeley fireworks display and all.

“The studios are not evil, by the way,” he says. “But I feel so sorry for most directors. You watch a film and think, ‘That guy can’t fucking direct.’ Then I imagine what *Kingsman* would have been like with...” And he goes on to catalogue the scenes Fox wanted cut or amended...

Vaughn is great company: swearing, gregarious, and loyal to his colleagues. “We bonded a little over our backgrounds — we didn’t really grow up with fathers,” says Mark Strong, collaborating for the third time with Vaughn on *Kingsman* (he was also offered the Kevin Bacon role in *X-Men: First Class*). “He can be totally honest with me, and I’m the same with him. All the best directors work with the people they trust, and who trust them. You both know the steps.”

But his bone-dry sense of humour

has garnered him a reputation as someone a tad 'difficult'. He's no respecter of ego, often using his God Mic on set to bellow instructions to normally cosseted actors in full view of 150 people. "There were times when his voice would come over the speaker," laughs Taron Egerton, the young Welsh actor who hadn't set foot on a film set before Vaughn cast him as Eggsy. "Taron, you're pulling a face and you look fucking stupid.' I won't lie — first week, I was going, 'This guy's a wanker.' But when you understand him, you know he's only doing that if he respects you enough."

Vaughn laughs when *Empire* brings up his reputation. "Look, I butt heads with idiots," he admits. "I had a drink with David Fincher a couple of years ago. I said, 'David, apparently you're the most difficult director in Hollywood.' He said, 'I hear you are.' And we both laughed so hard. The studios all think I'm difficult. If being passionate, opinionated and sticking to your guns is difficult, then yes, I am."

But Vaughn's solid, inspired work as a director is slowly breaking down those misconceptions. When we speak, he's wrestling with an offer to direct a huge sequel, torn between the chance to make something iconic and the loss of liberty he'd face butting heads with executives who could well be idiots. And before you ask, it's not *Star Wars* (a public flirtation with *Episode VII*), with actor pal Jason Flemyng saying at a premiere that he was set to direct it, earned Vaughn "a grumpy message from Kathleen Kennedy"), and it's not Bond ("Barbara Broccoli's not very keen on me," he smiles. "I've definitely done something that has pissed her off... I'm not sure what it is. I've said a lot!").

Whether he takes it or, in the event of not being proper fucked should *Kingsman* do well at the box office, goes to work on a sequel to his spy caper, the offer has given him a boost. He sees it as a sign the path he chose 10 years ago, switching from being Guy Ritchie's producer, is paying off. "I used to say to people that I'm a film producer, but I'm not as interested in that now," he muses. "I was embarrassed to say I was a director. I didn't feel like one. But I've slowly realised I see movies in my head now. I think like a director. So yeah, I've become a director now." And, of course, a Bond villain on the side.



12 MAD MAX: FURY ROAD

OUT || MAY 14

PLAYERS Tom Hardy, Charlize Theron, Hugh Keays-Byrne, Nicholas Hoult, Zoë Kravitz, Rosie Huntington-Whitely, George Miller (director)

PLOT Deep into the V8 apocalypse created by Miller, Max teams up with Imperator Furiosa in the Road Wars across the wasteland. That appears to be the general gist. And we're okay with that.

PITCH If the front cover of a certain World's Biggest Movie Magazine is to be believed (ahem), this should be bigger and dustier than *Ben Hur*. Miller has been wanting to make the fourth instalment for a couple of decades and you can be entirely sure nothing will be left in the sheds. Plus, who better than Tom Hardy in Mel's mad boots?

PITFALLS? Is it possible to contain the same kind of casual depravity found in *Mad Max* and *Mad Max 2* with the cultural mores of 2015 without veering off into the Thunderdome?

PAY-OFF Max is back, man! DM



13 THE DEAD LANDS

OUT || TBC 2015

PLAYERS James Rolleston, Lawrence Makoare, Toa Fraser (director)

PLOT Hongi (Rolleston), the scion to a slaughtered Maori tribe, must avenge their deaths to grant them peace. Vastly outnumbered he must enter the forbidden Dead Lands and forge an alliance with a mysterious veteran warrior (Makoare).

PITCH This has pumped the blood of audiences on the film festival circuit in 2014, using kung fu tropes in a pre-European New Zealand, right down to the Maori fight style, Mau rakau, and told in the Maori language, te reo.

PITFALLS? A blood-filled actioner with subtitles may alienate a pocket of the audience.

PAY-OFF Lawrence Makoare is Peter Jackson's go-to Orc Chief, playing Gothmog and Lurtz in *LOTR*, and Bolg in *The Hobbit*! DM

FEBRUARY UNDATED 14 THE HOMESMAN

DIR Tommy Lee Jones

CAST Tommy Lee Jones, Hilary Swank, Meryl Streep

In his fourth double act as director and leading man, Jones is a sorry drifter employed by a defiant woman (Swank) to help her transport three emotionally scarred women to respite through the perilous frontier Nebraskan territories.

15 THE NIGHTINGALE

DIR Philippe Muyl **CAST**

Li Baotian, Yang Xinyi

Muyl transplants *The Butterfly*, his France set rural journey of a blossoming relationship between an elderly widower (Baotian) and a spoilt girl (Xinyi) to China.

MARCH 5 16 BLACK SEA

DIR Kevin Macdonald

CAST Jude Law, Scott McNairy,

Ben Mendelsohn

On the hunt for treasure in the Black Sea, a submarine captain (Law) and his crew face off against each other in a fight to stay alive.

17 MANNY LEWIS

DIR Anthony Mir **CAST**

Carl Barron, Leeanna Walsman,

Roy Billing

Popular Australian comedian Barron makes his film debut in this comedy drama about a shy comic with an uneasy relationship with his Dad (Billing) and a quaint love interest (Walsman).

18 SEVENTH SON

DIR Sergey Bodrov

CAST Julianne Moore,

Jeff Bridges, Ben Barnes

This much delayed medieval fantasy epic finally arrives. But forget seventh sons, sorceresses and swordplay, we're pumped to see this reunion of Eli Duderino and Maude. But that's just, like, our opinion, man.



200 MOVIES TO WATCH IN 2015



19 ANT-MAN

OUT || JULY 16

PLAYERS Paul Rudd, Michael Douglas, Evangeline Lilly, Peyton Reed (director)

PLOT Petty crook Scott Lang (Rudd) decides to steal from an elderly recluse. Little does he know his mark is really genius inventor Hank Pym (Douglas), or that he's about to be launched into a huge (but tiny) adventure.

PITCH Marvel's last major gamble, *Guardians Of The Galaxy*, took us to far-flung planets. Their next one will take us down to, uh, the carpet. "One of the ideas that excited me about *Ant-Man* is that it will seem as otherworldly as outer space," says Paul Rudd, who'll become bug-sized for the film's action sequences. "I'm running around dodging shoes and vacuum cleaners. Visually, it will look just bananas." Coming soon after *Avengers 2*, it's a smaller entry for Marvel, but with a fine cast and a fresh visual hook it could be one of 2015's enjoyable surprises. Promises Rudd: "We've come a long way since *Honey, I Shrunk The Kids*."

PITFALLS? It's had a wobbly history. Original director Edgar Wright and Marvel suffered creative differences, so for Reed it's an inherited project.

PAY-OFF To infinitesimal and beyond! **NDS**



20 CRIMSON PEAK

OUT || OCTOBER 15

PLAYERS Mia Wasikowska, Tom Hiddleston, Jessica Chastain, Charlie Hunnam, Guillermo del Toro (writer/director)

PLOT A young woman (Wasikowska) is swept off by her feet by a charismatic suitor (Hiddleston) and taken back to his ancestral home. There she finds more than she bargained for, including a jealous sister (Chastain) and more than a few skeletons in the closet.

PITCH After taking some time away to dally with creatures great and small, *Crimson Peak* finds the Mexican master of horror, Guillermo del Toro, determined to scare the bejesus out of us once again with this gothic romance which will feature plenty of brooding from a tortured Tom Hiddleston and Mia Wasikowska, and a haunted house — Allerdale Hall — that has more than its fair share of ghosts. "In the gothic, there is the possibility of ghosts," says del Toro, who recruited regulars Doug Jones and Javier Botet to provide some phantom menace. "For me, the supernatural or monsters are a reality, and this is in the movies I do. They are palpable for me, but it's not alien

to the genre. If you go to *Wuthering Heights*, there is the possibility of ghosts..."

PITFALLS? Few and far between. The romantic aspects of a gothic romance are new territory for del Toro. But the prospect of the director returning to his red roots is a thing to be applauded, if you can applaud with one hand clasped over your eyes.

PAY-OFF The peak of del Toro's career? Just maybe... **CH**





21 INHERENT VICE OUT | MARCH 12

PLAYERS Starring Joaquin Phoenix, Josh Brolin, Benicio Del Toro, Paul Thomas Anderson (director)

PLOT Joaquin Phoenix's marijuana-fogged PI Doc Sportello is lured into taking a straight missing-person case that will soon bizarre-out into mental asylums, massage parlours, Nazi biker gangs and a humour-deficient cop, 'Bigfoot' (Josh Brolin).

PITCH Paul Thomas Anderson continues to plough his own idiosyncratic furrow, taking on the 2009 novel from the magnificently unadaptable Thomas Pynchon. *Inherent Vice* haunts a schizophrenic 1970 Los Angeles, loaded with toking hippies and fascist cops, as the '60s fade with the arrival of big business and hard drugs. It's what might happen if Robert Altman remade *The Big Lebowski* or Hal Ashby retooled *L.A. Confidential* as a supine character piece.

PITFALLS But will it make any damn sense?

PAY-OFF A conspiracy trippy enough to make *JFK* look like *Ride Along*. IN

22 VICTOR FRANKENSTEIN

OUT | OCTOBER 1

PLAYERS Daniel Radcliffe, James McAvoy, Paul McGuigan (director)

PLOT A reimagining of the Mary Shelley classic, concentrating on the relationship between Doctor Victor Frankenstein (McAvoy) and Igor (Radcliffe) and told from the assistant's perspective.

PITCH "Even an audience who has never seen a Frankenstein movie before or read the book has got an expectation," says McAvoy. "The first thing that comes to mind is probably a flat head, then maybe, 'It's alive!' What was really cool about what

Max [Landis, screenwriter] has done is he honours all that, but there's so much more there as well." "For Igor," says Radcliffe, "it's about becoming empowered and then trying to save the man who once saved him."

PITFALLS Do we need another Franky?

PAY-OFF It's revisionist, it's bold, it's aliiiiive. NP



MARCH 5 cont.

23 TOP FIVE

DIR Chris Rock

CAST Chris Rock, Rosario Dawson Rock's bawdy riff on the comedy circuit and being famous and black sees him play comedian Andre Allen, whose career and past are confronted by a sharp journo (Dawson).

24 UNFINISHED BUSINESS

DIR Ken Scott **CAST** Vince Vaughn, Tom Wilkinson, Dave Franco

Three American businessmen on the tear in Germany? *Das ist madcap!* Vaughn's reteaming with *Delivery Man* director Scott is shaping up as a smash-up of *Office Space*, *Wedding Crashers* and *European Vacation*.

MARCH 12

25 CLOUDS OF SILS MARIA

DIR Olivier Assayas

CAST Juliette Binoche, Kristen Stewart, Chloë Grace Moretz Art imitates life in this story from Assayas with Binoche as aging actress Maria playing opposite a troubled starlet (Moretz) in a theatre revival, who has taken the role she originated.

26 KIDNAPPING MR. HEINEKEN

DIR Daniel Alfredson

CAST Jim Sturgess, Sam Worthington, Anthony Hopkins Hopkins plays Dutch beer heir Freddy Heineken kidnapped in 1983 by four Dutch friends for a record ransom. Marvel at their bumbling though successful gambit, and the mishmash of Aussie and Pommy cast accents.

27 MCFARLAND

DIR Niki Caro **CAST** Kevin

Costner, Maria Bello, Morgan Saylor Kevin Costner is a sucker for sports movies – *Field Of Dreams*, *Bull Durham*, et al – this time playing a cross country coach who whips disadvantaged kids into shape as champion runners. Feel the fuzz.

28 PARANORMAL ACTIVITY: GHOST DIMENSION

DIR Gregory Plotkin **CAST** Katie Featherston, Tyler Craig

The found footage franchise that simply won't die spooks up a haunted house scenario in this fifth entry.

MARCH 19

29 BIG EYES

DIR Tim Burton **CAST** Amy

Adams, Christoph Waltz Described as one of the 20th century's great art frauds, Burton helms with Adams as wronged artist Margaret Keane and Waltz as her scoundrel husband who claimed he was behind the iconic 1950s bulbous-eyed child portraits.

30 THE COUP

DIR John Erick Dowdle

CAST Pierce Brosnan, Lake Bell No stranger to thrill-making, Dowdle (*Quarantine*, *Devil*) directs this heart-pounder where a family is trapped in a foreign country during the deadly chaos of a coup.

31 THE GUNMAN

DIR Pierre Morel **CAST**

Sean Penn, Idris Elba, Javier Bardem Penn graduates to the Hollywood-middle-aged-leading-man-turned-action-star club as a former government contract killer who becomes the hunted in an escapade across Europe. Based on the Jean-Patrick Manchette novel.

32 HOME

DIR Tim Johnson **CAST**

Steve Martin, Jim Parsons, Rihanna The latest from Dreamworks Animation and the makers of *The Croods* comes this star-voiced tale of girl Tip (Rihanna) and alien Oh (Parsons) on a fugitive road trip after extra-terrestrials take over Earth.

33 INSURGENT

DIR Robert Schwentke

CAST Shailene Woodley, Kate Winslet, Theo James The YA dystopic series continues in stunning fashion as Tris (Woodley) faces off not only with cold-as-ice Jeanine (Winslet), leader of the Erudites, but also with... herself.



Insurgent.



34 AVENGERS: AGE OF ULTRON OUT || APRIL 23

PLAYERS Robert Downey Jr., Chris Evans, Mark Ruffalo, James Spader, Scarlett Johansson, Chris Hemsworth, Joss Whedon (writer/director)

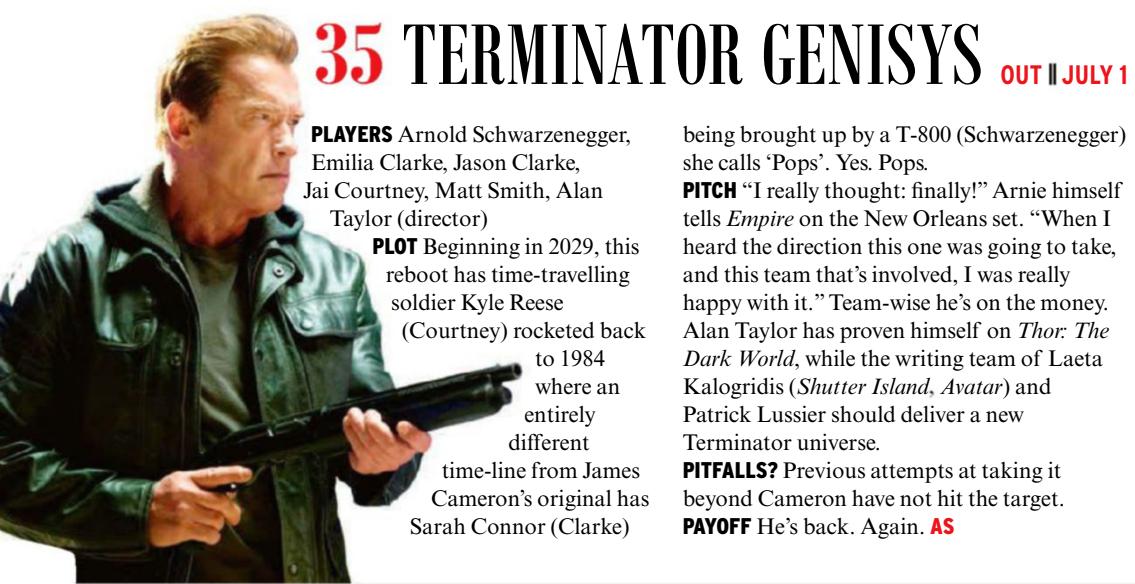
PLOT Our heroes face their biggest challenge to date: a killer robot (Spader) with a grudge against Tony Stark (Downey Jr.)

PITCH Possibly the only film this year that could beat *Star Wars* to the box-office crown. It would have been so easy for writer-director Joss Whedon to simply rehash his mega-hit first Avengers movie, but *Age Of Ultron* promises to tear up the blueprint: it'll start with the team already together, then gradually, via the triple-pronged threat of James Spader's titular

A.I.-hole, Elizabeth Olsen's Scarlet Witch and Aaron Taylor-Johnson's Quicksilver, hit the heroes where it hurts. "I want a chance to dig under the skin," says Whedon, "so Ultron is great. He comes from them [*the Avengers*; Stark inadvertently creates him], so he is obsessed with them. Tony Stark is a big issue for him..."

PITFALLS? Too many characters could spoil the broth. And with two more Avengers movies due in 2018 and 2019, plus further films featuring Captain America, Thor and Iron Man, will there be a lack of tension?

PAY-OFF Avengers Reassemble. Audiences assemble in their masses. **CH**



35 TERMINATOR GENISYS OUT || JULY 1

PLAYERS Arnold Schwarzenegger, Emilia Clarke, Jason Clarke, Jai Courtney, Matt Smith, Alan Taylor (director)

PLOT Beginning in 2029, this reboot has time-travelling soldier Kyle Reese (Courtney) rocketed back to 1984 where an entirely different time-line from James Cameron's original has Sarah Connor (Clarke)

being brought up by a T-800 (Schwarzenegger) she calls 'Pops'. Yes. Pops.

PITCH "I really thought: finally!" Arnie himself tells *Empire* on the New Orleans set. "When I heard the direction this one was going to take, and this team that's involved, I was really happy with it." Team-wise he's on the money. Alan Taylor has proven himself on *Thor: The Dark World*, while the writing team of Laeta Kalogridis (*Shutter Island*, *Avatar*) and Patrick Lussier should deliver a new Terminator universe.

PITFALLS? Previous attempts at taking it beyond Cameron have not hit the target.

PAYOFF He's back. Again. **AS**

36 SPECTRE OUT || NOVEMBER 19

PLAYERS Daniel Craig, Christoph Waltz, Monica Bellucci, Léa Seydoux, Ralph Fiennes, Sam Mendes (director)

PLOT 007 returns, post-Judi Dench, with the original Bond template reinstated; the spy facing off with Ian Fleming-invented sinister organisation SPECTRE.

PITCH "I hadn't finished telling their story," Sam Mendes confesses, at the launch of the new movie. "And I feel, immodestly, I am the best person to tell it." Despite hackers leaking the script, the plot remains officially secret. All we know is that, "some big shadows from Bond's past are going to resurface," Mendes teases, a cryptic message from 007's past sending him in search of the titular outfit, with the assistance of a new model of Aston Martin. New cast members include Léa Seydoux and Monica Bellucci, with Christoph Waltz as head big bad Oberhauser. Rumours persist that Oberhauser is a cover name for one Ernst Stavro Blofeld.

PITFALLS? How do you top *Skyfall*?

PAY-OFF ... By mixing the realistic Craig vibe with a classical Connery framework. Introspection with exploding pens! **IN**



MARCH 19

38 WILD TALES

DIR Damián Szifrón **CAST** Rita Cortese, Ricardo Darín, Nancy Dupláa. Vengeance thy name is Argentina in this set of darkly comic vignettes produced by Pedro Almodóvar, said to echo him, plus Spielberg, Tarantino and others.

39 X + Y

DIR Morgan Matthews **CAST** Asa Butterfield, Rafe Spall, Sally Hawkins. Butterfield is an autistic teen maths whiz thrown into the International

Mathematical Olympiad in an affecting story inspired by the director's doco *Beautiful Young Minds*.

MARCH 26

40 A LITTLE CHAOS

DIR Alan Rickman **CAST** Kate Winslet, Alan Rickman. Romance in King Louis XIV-era Versailles with Winslet as progressive landscape designer Madame Sabine De Barra in Hans Gruber's... sorry, Alan Rickman's first directorial effort in almost 20 years.

41 CINDERELLA

DIR Kenneth Branagh **CAST** Lily James, Helena Bonham Carter. Another Disney heroine gets the live action treatment in what appears to be a traditional, fairy-dust coated rendition with *Downton*'s James as Cindy, Bonham Carter as the fairy godmother and Cate Blanchett as the wicked stepmother.

42 GET HARD

DIR Etan Cohen **CAST** Will Ferrell, Kevin Hart, Alison Brie. Comedy in which a wrongly arrested big

time investment banker (Ferrell) employs his car washer (Hart) to prepare him for the rigours of the slammer. Right...

43 INFINITELY POLAR BEAR

DIR Maya Forbes **CAST** Mark Ruffalo, Zoe Saldana. A manic depressive Boston dad (Ruffalo) sets about winning back his wife (Saldana) by taking care of his daughters. *The Larry Sanders Show* writer Forbes makes this directorial debut based on her own life.



37 EVEREST

OUT II SEPTEMBER 17

PLAYERS Jake Gyllenhaal, Josh Brolin, John Hawkes, Keira Knightley, Baltasar Kormákur (director)

PLOT The true story of two expeditions that set out to conquer Everest in 1996. A combination of bad decisions and worse weather turn a life-affirming quest into a battle for survival.

PITCH You take on Earth's highest mountain at your peril. The makers of *Everest*, a recreation of the peak's most notorious calamity, learned this first-hand on April 18, 2014, when an avalanche struck near where the second unit was shooting, killing 16 sherpas. While the production was only briefly delayed, it was a reminder of the massive

bodycount the Himalayan whopper has amassed since it was first scaled in 1953. "There may not be a superhero in this movie," says director Baltasar Kormákur, "but the mountain is a supervillain." The Icelandic tyro is set to deliver an old-school, star-packed disaster movie, spruced up with cutting-edge effects and 3D. "I've approached it like a space movie," he says. "Up there in the death zone you can't breathe; it's the same altitude as jet-liners fly. I'm drawn to extreme environments, and the top of Everest is as extreme as anything on this planet."

PITFALLS? *Vertical Limit*, anyone?

PAYOUT Mount Doom, on steroids. **NDS**



44 LEVIATHAN

DIR Andrey Zvyagintsev **CAST** Vladimir Vdovichenkov, Elena Lyadova *The Return*'s helmer, ah, returns with this contemporary Russian version of the biblical story of Job.

45 MOMMY

DIR Xavier Dolan **CAST** Anne Dorval, Antoine-Olivier Pilon Prolific young Québécan filmmaker tells the tale of a widowed single mom struggling to raise her violent son until a new neighbour helps save the situation.



46 DIOR AND I

DIR Frédéric Tcheng **CAST** Raf Simons, Anna Wintour Fashion doco which goes behind the scenes of Christian Dior and the first haute couture collection of its new artistic director Raf Simons.

MARCH UNDATED

47 TINKERBELL: LEGEND OF THE NEVERBEAST

DIR Steve Loter **CAST** Mae Whitman, Anjelica Huston, Lucy Liu The Disney sprites are back in this

seventh adventure which sees Pixie Hollow visited by a beastie that just might be a big teddy bear inside.

APRIL 2

48 '71

DIR Yann Demange **CAST** Jack O'Connell, Sam Reid, Sean Harris O'Connell stars as a young Brit soldier set adrift on the rampant streets of Belfast during The Troubles in 1971 in what promises to be a gripping thriller of one man's fight to survive in enemy territory.

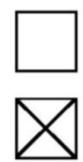
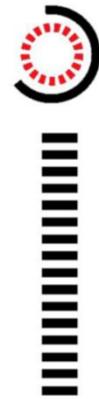
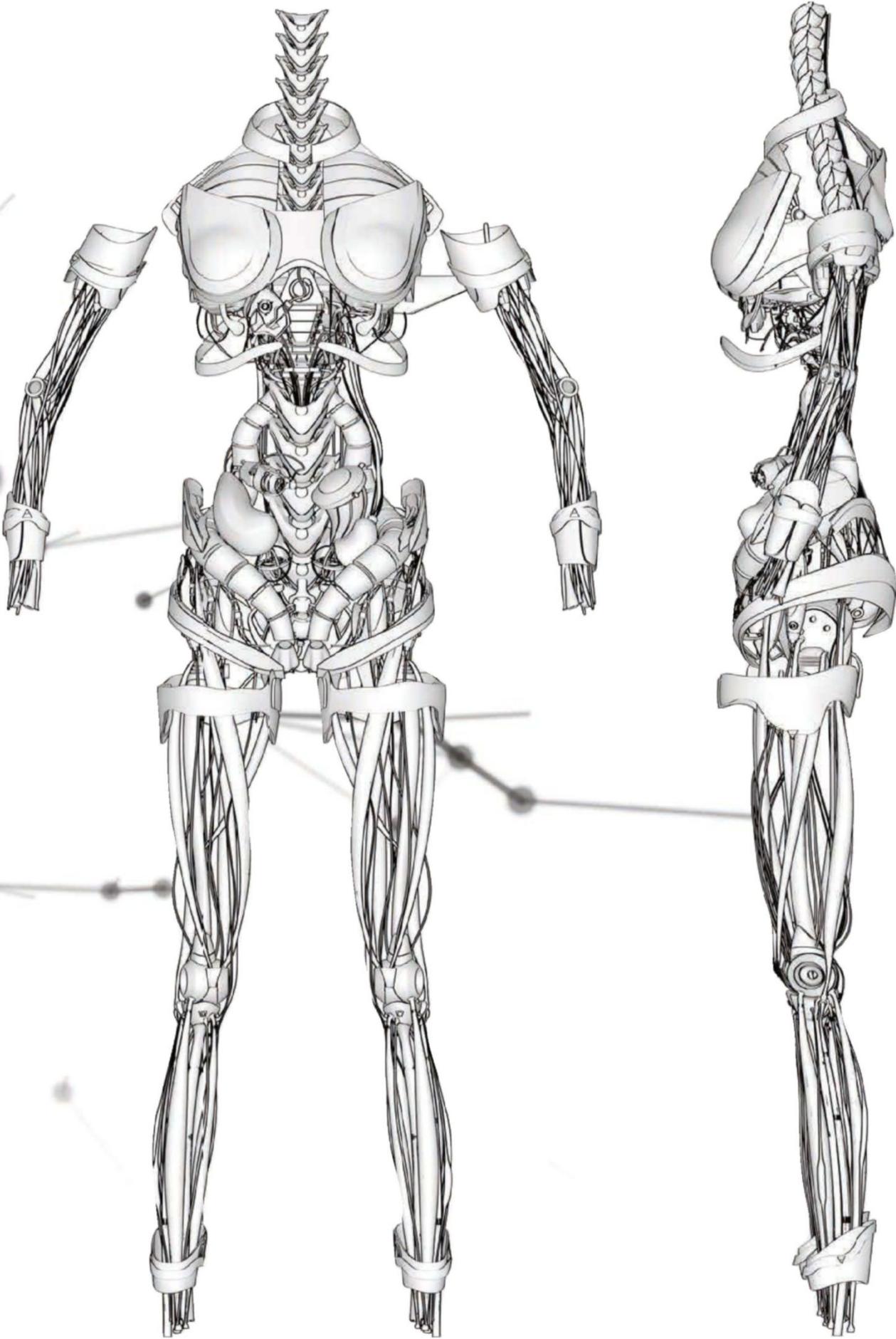
200
MOVIES TO WATCH
IN 2015

49
OUT II 2015 TBC

HUMAN CYBORG RELATIONS

DIRECTOR ALEX GARLAND AND HIS *EX MACHINA* SCIENTIFIC ADVISORS JOIN *EMPIRE* TO TACKLE THE THORNY QUESTION OF REAL-WORLD ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE – AND WHAT IT MEANS FOR THE FUTURE OF HUMANITY...

WORDS MARK SALISBURY





“love science fiction,” says novelist-turned-filmmaker Alex Garland, whose screenplays to date have all revealed an interest in the more serious side of the genre. “It just gives permission for some really, really big ideas. That could be fascist wish-fulfillment in a futuristic cop movie [*Dredd*], or complex ethics of cloning in *Never Let Me Go*. Equally, science fiction allows you to talk about something happening in the here and now. I’m always looking to smuggle something in. Somehow the customs officials are more relaxed in sci-fi...”

In the case of *Ex Machina*, which marks Garland’s debut as director, that subterfuge includes issues of privacy (“Some of it is to do with what we’re giving up of ourselves in everything to do with the internet”) as well as “the increasing knowledge of our organic fallibility and the power of machines”. But the film deals mainly with the blue-sky concept of artificial intelligence, having sprung from a decade-long argument Garland had with a friend over the question of whether or not A.I. could ever truly exist. While his friend insisted it couldn’t, Garland contends otherwise.

It was during post-production on his adaptation of Kazuo Ishiguro’s novel *Never Let Me Go* (written by Garland and directed by Mark Romanek) that Garland began to get really fixated on the idea of artificial consciousness. “What happens to me with stories is I get obsessed with something and at some point that arrives as a narrative,” he explains. “There is a school of thought — and it’s not a fringe school — that says something big is happening with consciousness that we are not even close to understanding. How does dead matter become living matter and start thinking? It starts to sound metaphysical, and sound religious, but it

Director Alex Garland with Alicia Vikander as Ava.

MARY IN THE BLACK-AND-WHITE ROOM

Mary is a brilliant scientist who knows everything to know about colour. But she has acquired this knowledge from black-and-white books and TV in a locked monochrome room. One day, she leaves the room and enters the colour world. Does she learn anything new? This thought experiment is an attempt to address the central problem of experience. If she learns something new from experiencing colour, it implies the existence of entities of subjective experience that cannot be described, shared or learnt. These are called 'qualia'. Some argue qualia are fundamental and irreducible, others say that they are merely currently inscrutable brain activity. This classic thought experiment was analysed in a 2004 compendium called *There's Something About Mary*. Well played philosophers, well played.

Above: Prototype skulls, photographed by production designer Mark Digby.

Right: Domhnall Gleeson's Caleb and Oscar Isaac as Nathan.

THE CHINESE ROOM

Imagine you have a computer that can decipher Chinese symbols, read them and answer questions in Chinese by writing responses also in Chinese. This behaviour passes a Turing Test, so the human component in the test can't tell that it is a computer. The question posed by philosopher John Searle is this: does the computer understand Chinese, or is it simply simulating understanding?

True understanding equates to proper A.I., and Searle argues that an English speaker who doesn't understand Chinese could do the same in a locked room with the right translation cards. Therefore true A.I. will not really be possible.

isn't, necessarily." During this research period, another friend, novelist Andrew O'Hagan, gave him a copy of *Embodiment And The Inner Life: Cognition And Consciousness In The Space Of Possible Minds* by Murray Shanahan, a professor of cognitive robotics at Imperial College, London. This, says Garland, crystallised his thinking. "It's one of the most interesting things I've ever encountered."

So once Garland had finished his script, he sought out both Shanahan and scientist/broadcaster Adam Rutherford for their opinions, to "test the science" within. "In some respects, there isn't that much science in *Ex Machina*, but there are implications of possible sciences and the arguments surrounding them. In the world Murray functions in, stuff like the

MARY IN THE BLACK-AND-WHITE ROOM

ARGUMENT or THE CHINESE ROOM

ARGUMENT have a very specific meaning, and to misrepresent, say, *Mary In The Black-And-White Room* would be to fuck up a central point within the film." He points to Shanahan, who's to his left, along with Rutherford, the pair having joined him to chat with *Empire*. "Guys like him, they come up with this stuff, it's disseminated and it's hard to get your head around. If it was wrong, I needed to correct it. I like it when I watch science fiction and there's a basis in something that is accurate."

"I got this email out of the blue from Alex," recalls Shanahan. "Of course I knew the name right away, famous author and scriptwriter, working on A.I., wants to talk to me. It was very exciting. I read through the script and realised it was a very exciting balance of psychological thriller with all the intellectual stuff subtly embedded. It was a great relief, actually. I get involved in an A.I. film and it's a really good one."

Rutherford, who was recommended to Garland by a mutual friend, found the script reassuring. "I've done consultation on movies before [*and*] there's a great sense from certain branches of my community, of extreme animosity and anger that's prompted by duff science on screen," he says. "Alex said it has to be right and serve the script at the same time. There's no point in doing it unless people like us are going to scrutinise it and not be pissed off."



EX MACHINA

revolves around Ava (played by Swedish actress Alicia Vikander), an artificial intelligence housed in a female-looking robot, created by Oscar Isaac's reclusive billionaire, Nathan, genius founder of Bluebook, the world's most popular internet search engine. Having built Ava, Nathan invites Caleb (Domhnall Gleeson), a young programmer in his company, to spend a week with him to examine his creation for signs of consciousness, to prove whether she's self-aware, in an extension of

THE TURING TEST. Only, unlike the human participant in a Turing Test, Caleb is able to see and interact with Ava. "Once you give something sentience, moral stuff comes with it," says Garland. "There's an ethical dimension that instantly arrives."

As the test unfolds, the film moves into thriller territory, becoming as much about human consciousness as it is about an A.I.'s. On screen, Ava is completely plausible, a highly intelligent, humanoid robot capable of wholly realistic facial movements that allow for a high degree of empathy, and who is, quite possibly, self-aware. In reality, a conscious A.I. remains the stuff of speculation. Even A.I.-like machines such as Siri or the Roomba cleaning robot aren't, strictly speaking, A.I.s, since neither possess general intelligence and, according to Shanahan, are just bits of specialised embedded A.I. technology. Given all that, how feasible is Ava?

"Mechanically or intellectually?" Garland asks back.

Both.

"You're asking two slightly different questions. One is about robotics and the other is about A.I. and consciousness. From my understanding, neither are possible right now. Certainly, A.I.'s not possible. Ava is a flight of fancy in all forms. But she's a reasonable flight of fancy."

"Certainly it's feasible," reflects Shanahan, who cautions that the time frames involved in creating one aren't short term. "We don't know when the relevant breakthroughs might occur that make us think we can make things we never thought we could. But I'm absolutely sure it's feasible, because there's a brute-force way we could do this sort of

thing by replicating the human brain very closely. It may take us a hundred years. It could be this dramatic breakthrough has already happened in some lab somewhere, and we wouldn't necessarily know."

The future presented in *Ex Machina* is set "10 minutes from now", not a century hence, with its world recognisably our own. "The point is, if somebody like Google or Apple announced tomorrow that they had made Ava, we would all be surprised, but we wouldn't be *that* surprised," says Garland. "What Murray says, I completely understand. It's an unknowable thing, it's plausible, it's not now, it's some point in the future. But we know they're working on it."

In fact, Rutherford points out, in the time since Garland wrote the script, "Google has made this incredible land grab on A.I. and robotics companies," buying nine in total, including Boston Dynamics and *Bot & Dolly*. (The latter provided the robot arm that was used in the filming of *Gravity*.) "We don't have a theory of mind or an understanding of consciousness nearly sophisticated enough to do A.I., yet. We don't have mechanics sophisticated

"SOMETHING BIG IS HAPPENING WITH CONSCIOUSNESS." **ALEX GARLAND**

The many faces of Ava.

enough to make robots as sophisticated and as beautiful as Ava, yet. But look at some of the stuff Boston Dynamics is doing in terms of robotics, which I think is terrifying and amazing..."

"Which *I* think is pretty cool and *not* terrifying," interrupts Garland.

"I think they're cool, too," Rutherford insists, before citing the example of a four-legged automaton the company's designed to carry a gun.

"Okay, that's terrifying, I suppose," concedes Garland.

In the movie, Ava is powered by electricity, charging herself using an induction plate. Her knowledge is derived from the continual flow of information gushing into Nathan's Google-esque search. Her facial expressions and vocal interaction have been hacked from every

cellphone camera user on Earth, her female attributes deliberately designed to help engage Caleb in her consciousness. Her 'brain', meanwhile, is a gelatinous white-blue orb, "structured gel" rather than circuitry.

The latter is another of Garland's elaborate flights of fantasy, although Rutherford considers it an absolutely appropriate one. "If we are going to achieve this in the near future, it's going to require something dramatically different, in terms of how you can pack the necessary amount of switching elements into a small amount of matter, which is what we have in our own brains. Traditional electronics, silicon chips, in their current form, aren't going to do it. The brain is the most complex entity in the known universe. There are a hundred



A design for the set of Nathan's home research lab.

billion neurons. So the number of connections between these cells provides a framework that's more sophisticated than anything we know. At the moment we've got a pretty good understanding of how one cell works, arguably, and a not bad understanding of how a few cells work."

IF THE CREATION of a sentient A.I. isn't possible anytime soon, what about the kind of advanced robotics that allow Ava to move like a real human? Again, don't hold your breath.

"You've got to remember humans and biology have a four billion-year advantage over the mechanics we're using at the moment," explains Rutherford, who says that while the most sophisticated robots currently constructed are capable of playing "very slow football", they can't perform the sophisticated choreography that allows them to get in and out of a car. "They can get them to open the door, but they can't get them to sit."

Even though they might not make great valet parking attendants, *Empire* wonders if the arrival of a true A.I. would pose a threat to mankind. "I'm not someone who's fearful of scientific advances," muses Rutherford. "The phrase we use in a field I'm more closely associated with, which is genetic engineering, synthetic biology, is 'prudent vigilance'. That's a useful way of providing a framework in which we are free to invent neutral technologies and allow them to be applied, investigated and, if necessary, restricted. But that is a societal thing, not done by scientists, that's done through the processes of

democracy. I'm not scared of Google buying a bunch of A.I. and robotics companies. I have anxieties about the fact they are private and closed. As is Nathan in *Ex Machina*..."

Garland's contention is that while sci-fi cinema (and literature) has generally presented A.I. as scary and evil, or at the very least rebellious (be it Skynet destroying mankind in *The Terminator*, Hal 9000 killing crew in *2001*, or Roy Batty wanting to extend his life span in *Blade Runner*), he doesn't see it that way.

"I'm anti-alarmist. When we present them in fiction, it's usually as our nemesis; we're frightened by them. [In] the films we talk about, they are hostile. That's just being Neanderthal man suddenly threatened by Homo sapiens, except we can't see Homo sapiens yet. We can just see that Homo sapiens may come to be. Then we're going to have to make a decision: are we going to allow them to be, and make ourselves increasingly redundant, or not? *The Terminator* is effectively about this. It's always A.I. as malevolent, because on an unconscious level it threatens us. So that means it threatens us in the stories we tell about it."

In the end, Garland takes a more hopeful view. "An A.I. which is sentient, self-aware, conscious, a human-level A.I., I don't feel a sense of fear of," he concludes. "That sentient creature, I suspect, has a better and equally meaningful future to ours. It will be a longer future, and it has all the rights attendant on ours. Ava is the manifestation of that. I see A.I.s as interesting and optimistic. I see them as the way forwards. A.I.s are the future. I do think they'll be better than us."

APRIL 2 cont.
50 THE BOOK OF LIFE

DIR Jorge R. Gutierrez **CAST** Zoe Saldana, Diego Luna, Channing Tatum
Animation with a touch of *Coraline*'s aesthetic as young Manolo (Luna) goes on a tri-world adventure sparked by *The Day Of The Dead*. Guillermo del Toro produces.

51 DOCTOR PROCTOR'S FART POWDER

DIR Arild Fröhlich **CAST** Kristoffer Joner
From the bestselling kids' books by Scandi-noir king Jo Nesbø, comes this movie adaptation of a tale where farts jet propel you into space.

52 THE DUFF

DIR Ari Sandel **CAST** Bella Thorne, Mae Whitman
Teen comedy about a Designated Ugly Fat Friend who turns the tables on high school social hierarchy.

53 WE ARE YOUR FRIENDS

DIR Max Joseph **CAST** Zac Efron, Wes Bentley
Set in L.A.'s electronic music scene, Efron is aspiring DJ Cole, mentored by the older, hard living James (Bentley) and falling in love with James's much younger girlfriend Sophie (Emily Ratajkowski).

54 ONE EYED GIRL

DIR Nick Matthews **CAST** Tilda Cobham-Hervey, Mark Leonard Winter
Aussie thriller about a troubled psychiatrist (Winter) who meets teen Grace (Cobham-Hervey) who lures him into a cult run by magnetic Father Jay (Steve Le Marquand).

55 SAMBA

DIRS Olivier Nakache, Eric Toledano **CAST** Omar Sy, Charlotte Gainsbourg
From the directors of the hit French heartwarmer *The Intouchables* and featuring its star Sy as a migrant fighting to stay in France who falls in love with Charlotte Gainsbourg's immigration worker.

56 SPONGEBOB: SPONGE OUT OF WATER

DIR Paul Tibbitt **CAST** Clancy Brown, Antonio Banderas
The squealing sponge becomes superhero making the trip from animated world to human. Banderas plays the villain.

57 WHILE WE'RE YOUNG

DIR Noah Baumbach **CAST** Ben Stiller, Naomi Watts, Amanda Seyfried, Adam Driver
A comedy about acting your age, or not, where a staid middle aged couple (Stiller, Watts) find a new lease on life when they start hanging out with a vibrant young couple (Seyfried, Driver).

APRIL 9

58 COMING HOME

DIR Zhang Yimou **CAST** Li Gong, Daoming Chen
From auteur Zhang Yimou comes a searing depiction of a devoted couple forced apart by the Cultural Revolution.

59 HOT TUB TIME MACHINE 2

DIR Steve Pink **CAST** Craig Robinson, Rob Corddry
The crew are back minus John Cusack as time diddling and alternate realities lead to a murder that must be stopped. Shia LaBeouf!



Hot Tub Time Machine 2.



60 THAT SUGAR FILM

OUT || MARCH 1

PLAYERS Damon Gameau (writer/director/star)
Zoe Tuckwell-Smith, Hugh Jackman, Stephen Fry, Isabelle Lucas

PLOT Australian actor Damon Gameau's self-imposed challenge of a 60-day high sugar diet after years without refined sugar tests the effects of 'healthy' products with 'hidden' sugars and explores the global sugar industry.

PITCH It's been a while between bites of the everyman-filmmaker-turned-guinea-pig chugging down the fat-making powder and putting their health in mortal danger — all in the name of social education.

This is *Super Size Me*'s antipodean relative with

Damon Gameau the charismatic guinea pig, a kind of anti-Willy Wonka with a Willy Wonka aesthetic. "The big influence for me was to make it fun and accessible," Gameau tells *Empire*. "There is a section of affluent people that already understand this sugar message but it was about how do you get past that quinoa curtain? How do you penetrate that line and actually get it seen by people that need to see it who are thinking that these foods are healthy?" Kids are a key target and that's where the likes of high profile recruits Stephen Fry and Hugh Jackman come in. "Hugh of course has probably got the finest sculptured torso on the planet so he understands what food is going into his body and

how important it is. I don't think Wolverine would be quite as menacing with a beer gut."

"I thought the best person in the world to do this would be Stephen Fry because he's got that school teacher kind of manner but he's so approachable," Gameau adds. "He's battled sugar addiction since he was a child."

Like Morgan Spurlock's fat-ual documentary, this could make enemies of multi-nationals and effect real change.

PITFALLS? The tired Morgan Spurlock 'myself-as-guinea pig' could leave a sour taste.

PAY-OFF A chance to enjoy movie treats: jaffas, choc-tops, Fantales. Or maybe not... **JM**

APRIL 9 cont.

64 THE LONGEST RIDE

DIR George Tillman Jr. CAST Britt

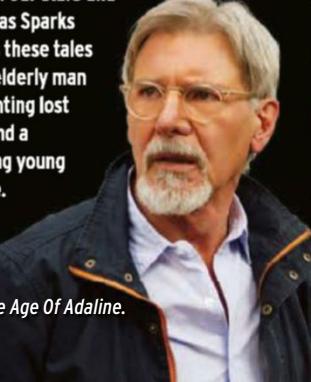
Robertson, Scott Eastwood, Jack Huston

From the people who brought you *The*

Fault In Our Stars and

Nicholas Sparks

comes these tales of an elderly man recounting lost love and a budding young couple.



APRIL 16

65 THE AGE OF ADALINE

DIR Lee Toland Krieger CAST

Blake Lively, Ellen Burstyn, Harrison Ford

Intriguing romance boasting a touch of the Benjamin Buttons with Lively as Adaline, who is rendered ageless for 80 years after a car accident at 29.

66 PAUL BLART: MALL COP 2

DIR Andy Fickman CAST Kevin James

Kevin James is back as the eponymous pratfalling mall cop in this follow up to

the hit(ish) comedy that sees him attempt to take down a heist in Las Vegas.

67 RUN ALL NIGHT

DIR Jaume Collet-Serra CAST

Liam Neeson, Joel Kinnaman, Ed Harris

Neeson and Collet-Serra (*Non-Stop*) continue down a worn road with Neeson an aging killer in a bid to protect his family from his ex-boss. "I will find you and I will kill you..." Wrong film. Fair mistake.

68 WOMAN IN GOLD

DIR Simon Curtis CAST Helen

Mirren, Ryan Reynolds, Katie Holmes

A true story, Mirren plays Jewish WWII survivor Maria Altman who took on the Austrian Government to have paintings stolen from her family returned.

APRIL 23

69 TESTAMENT OF YOUTH

DIR James Kent CAST

Kit Harington, Juliette Binoche,

Alicia Vikander

Jon Snow finally gets a haircut in this true story of love amongst war, based on the WWI memoir by Vera Brittain.



61 FURIOUS 7

OUT | APRIL 2

PLAYERS Vin Diesel, Paul Walker, Dwayne Johnson, Jordana Brewster, Michelle Rodriguez, Jason Statham, James Wan (director)

PLOT The gang is back for more high-octane madness. This time, Dom (Diesel) and the crew must deal with family vengeance when Owen Shaw's brother (Jason Statham) comes after them. Cue far-flung (and car-flung) action...

PITCH With Aussie James Wan taking the wheel, the new *Fast* film aims to keep what everyone liked about *Five* and *Six* (crazy car chaos in flashy international locations) while also bringing things home to Los Angeles. So expect vehicular mayhem in Abu Dhabi (indoors, no less) and some intense gunplay courtesy of Kurt Russell's still-classified but military-flavoured character. Though Paul Walker tragically died partway through the shoot, his scenes were completed with the help of his brothers, and he'll be given a proper send-off.

PITFALLS? There's always the very real fear this franchise could run out of fuel after so many entries.

PAY-OFF Putting the revs into revenge. **JW**

62 TOMORROWLAND

OUT | MAY 21

PLAYERS George Clooney, Britt Robertson, Hugh Laurie, Damon Lindelof (writer/producer), Brad Bird (writer/director/producer)

PLOT A young girl (Robertson) and a cranky inventor (Clooney) team up to find a hidden city that offers a glimpse of the future.

PITCH It may be stretching it to say that a movie based not just on a theme park ride, à la *Pirates Of The Caribbean*, but an entire theme park zone can be considered an original property. But that's what *Tomorrowland* feels like. The pairing of Damon Lindelof and Brad Bird points to a film whose brain will be as big as its heart, and early footage glimpsed

by *Empire* suggests that this will be ingenious and action-packed, and like nothing else this year. "We're feeling around in the dark and we're excited by that, but it's also a scary thing," says Bird. "We can't point to 20 other movies and go, 'It's like that.' The closest thing we have is *Close Encounters* — and it's not that much like *Close Encounters*!"

PITFALLS? Dubious fanboys would point to Lindelof as a potential danger, but the man is smart, witty and inventive, while Bird simply doesn't do average. The biggest peril here might be managing expectations.

PAY-OFF The movie of tomorrow — today! **CH**



63 THE MARTIAN

OUT | NOVEMBER 26

PLAYERS Matt Damon, Jessica Chastain, Chiwetel Ejiofor, , Ridley Scott (director)

PLOT Botanist Mark Watney (Damon) joins an expedition to Mars, where he is accidentally left behind and must struggle to survive alone.

PITCH Based on Andy Weir's bestselling novel, *The Martian* sounds like *Cast Away On Mars* — and if you're going to have any actor to hold the screen while stranded, Damon is your man. Not

that the rest of the cast is too shabby, either. "It's an incredible book," says Jessica Chastain, who plays the captain of the expedition. "The crew thinks he's dead, so they leave. Then he wakes up and realises, 'Okay, how much food do I have left? How do I try to grow crops on the soil where there's no bacteria?' All these things to try to live long enough for someone to realise he's there..."

PITFALLS? *Prometheus* showed how Ridley Scott sci-fi can be divisive.

PAY-OFF *Robinson Crusoe On Mars*. **NP**

APRIL 30

70 FAR FROM THE MADDING CROWD

DIR Thomas Vinterberg **CAST** Carey Mulligan, Juno Temple, Michael Sheen Thomas Hardy's classic love story gets its third big screen adaptation with Mulligan as the heroine Bathsheba Everden, the kind of literary forebear to Katniss.

71 MAN UP

DIR Ben Palmer **CAST** Simon Pegg, Lake Bell, Olivia Williams When divorcee Jack (Pegg) mistakes

tiredly single Nancy (Bell) for his blind date, she goes with it sparking one wild, eventually comical London night.

72 KURT COBAIN: MONTAGE OF HECK

DIR Brett Morgen **CAST** Courtney Love, Dave Grohl, Kurt Cobain The first fully-authorised documentary about the life of the late Kurt Cobain, charting his journey from rural Aberdeen, Washington to making his band Nirvana a household name. Crucially, Courtney Love has no say on the final edit...



She's Funny That Way.

APRIL UNDATED

73 WHITE BIRD IN A BLIZZARD

DIR Gregg Araki **CAST** Shailene Woodley, Eva Green, Christopher Meloni It-Girl Woodley stars as teen Kat Connors whose life is thrown into turmoil when her troubled mum (Green) disappears.

MAY 7

74 SHE'S FUNNY THAT WAY

DIR Peter Bogdanovich **CAST** Imogen Poots, Owen Wilson Bogdanovich goes for the screwball comedy of his *What's Up, Doc?* as Poots's call girl climbs the ladder to actress by way of Wilson's married theatre director.

200 MOVIES TO WATCH IN 2015



75 JURASSIC WORLD

OUT || JUNE 11



76 CHILD 44 OUT || APRIL TBC

PLAYERS Tom Hardy, Gary Oldman, Noomi Rapace, Joel Kinnaman, Daniel Espinosa (director)

PLOT Moscow, 1953, and children's bodies are turning up on the icy streets. But how does Officer Leo Demidov (Hardy) hunt down a potential serial killer in a state that has decreed crime no longer exists?

PITCH After a career defined by extravagant villainy, Tom Hardy will be playing it straight for this adaptation of Tom Rob Smith's bestselling thriller. What really entices about *Child 44* is the notion of transplanting classic serial killer tropes, right down to the disillusioned detective, into the through-the-looking-glass madness of Stalin's reign of terror. With its supporting cast of edgy chameleons like Gary Oldman, Noomi Rapace and Paddy Considine, *Child 44* is looking to attain that high-end combo of mystery and miserablism that elevated *True Detective*, only with a lot more snow.

PITFALLS? Will we relate to Hardy as a downtrodden good guy?

PAY-OFF After Nordic Noir comes Bolshevik Noir. **IN**

PLAYERS Chris Pratt, Bryce Dallas Howard, Ty Simpkins, Nick Robinson, Colin Trevorrow (co-writer/director)

PLOT Finally, John Hammond's dream has become a reality: Isla Nublar is open to the public. But it's not long before chaos theory strikes again — and this time there are plenty more people for the dinos to chew on.

PITCH "I'm comfortable going to Crazytown," says Colin Trevorrow, "because I used to live there when I was a kid." The 38-year-old had his mind exploded by *Jurassic Park* as a teenager, and aims to similarly detonate the world's collective noggin with his sci-fi-tinged addition to the franchise. The first trailer gave us some idea of what to expect from *Jurassic World*: a fully functioning theme park; a gigantic, great white-chomping liopleurodon; and a top-secret, lab-designed dinosaur, which looks likely to trigger the inevitable tourist-trashing bedlam. Even more intriguingly, this time the velociraptors appear to have been tamed by the park's ranger (Chris Pratt). What?

PITFALLS? Trevorrow is adding some wild ideas. Fingers crossed this doesn't jump the shark-eating carnivore.

PAY-OFF Chris Pratt plus dinosaurs? Everything is roarsome. **NDS**

77 THE FANTASTIC FOUR

OUT || AUGUST 6

PLAYERS Jamie Bell, Miles Teller, Kate Mara, Michael B Jordan, Toby Kebbell, Josh Trank (director), Simon Kinberg (writer/producer)

PLOT After an experiment goes awry, four humans are endowed with superpowers that prove both blessing and curse. They bicker and bond and must work together to defeat a malevolent programmer known as Doom.

PITCH Eight years after *Rise Of The Silver Surfer* appeared to sink the franchise, Fox is hoping Josh Trank can infuse this reboot with the thrill and invention he gave superhero sleeper *Chronicle*. Co-writer/producer Simon Kinberg says it's "a much more grounded, gritty, realistic movie" than the previous films. Kebbell dropped this about his villain: "He's Victor Domashev, not Victor Von Doom. I'm a programmer. A very anti-social programmer. And on blogging sites I'm 'Doom.'"

PITFALLS? The last superhero reboot resulted in *The Amazing, Alright Actually Just Okay Spider-Man*.

PAY-OFF Younger. Sexier. Fantastic-er. **NP**





78 INSIDE OUT OUT || JUNE 18

PLAYERS Amy Poehler, Mindy Kaling, Bill Hader, Lewis Black, Phyllis Smith (voices), Pete Docter (writer/director)

PLOT A trip into the mind of 11-year-old Riley, who moves from the Midwest to San Francisco with her family. As her brain deals with this, her emotions, including Joy (Poehler) and Sadness (Smith), go on their own journey.

PITCH This, along with *The Good Dinosaur* represent Pixar's long-awaited return to original filmmaking. *Inside Out* seems fresh, and like the best Pixars it takes a universally relatable concept (growing up) and matches it with some clever, striking visuals. While there's some real psychology behind it, director Pete Docter admits they've fudged the science for dramatic purposes, especially in the number of emotions. "Most scientists will say we're missing surprise, which to us felt kind of like fear in the way we portray him."

PITFALLS? Original stories have to work harder to strike a chord with audiences, though Pixar has a better success ratio than most.

PAY-OFF Pixar's *Life Of Brain*. **JW**



79 SHAUN THE SHEEP

OUT || MARCH 26

PLAYERS Justin Fletcher, John Sparkes, Mark Burton (director), Richard Starzack (director)

PLOT The enigmatic ovine hero and his flock travel to the big city. "Inevitably they cause havoc," says co-director Mark Burton. "We've got a man falling in love with a sheep dressed as a woman, a kidnap involving a pantomime horse, sheep burping in a restaurant. We're telling an epic tale in a very *Shaun The Sheep* way — there's no dialogue, just like the TV show."

PITCH Shaun — the silent sheep at the heart of over 100 short episodes on ABC 4 Kids — is being fattened up nicely. But will it be bigger? Better? Baaader? "Definitely bigger and better," says Burton. "We're about a third of the way through a nine-month production shoot," says Burton of a schedule that dwarves most Hollywood blockbusters, thanks to stop-motion animation. "Nine months is lightning speed!" laughs Burton.

PITFALLS? Burton: "If anyone utters another sheep pun, bleat me."

PAY-OFF Should be woolly good. **CH**

80 SPY

DIR Paul Feig **CAST** Melissa McCarthy, Rose Byrne, Jason Statham *Bridesmaids* alum Feig, McCarthy and Byrne reunite with McCarthy as a bumbling rookie CIA spook. Also starring Curtis 'Fiddly Cent' Jackson, Jude Law and Statham going against type as a clumsy spy.

81 HOT PURSUIT

DIR Anne Fletcher **CAST** Reese Witherspoon, Sofia Vergara Odd couple comedy with Witherspoon as a cop on the run in Texas with an unlikely prisoner, *Modern Family's* breakout star and resident sexpot Sofia Vergara.

MAY 28

82 MONSTER TRUCKS

DIR Chris Wedge **CAST** Rob Lowe, Jane Levy The latest treasured toy-to-film franchise hopeful kicks off with this live action/CG hybrid pitched as a cross between *Transformers* and *The Goonies*.

83 SAN ANDREAS 3D

DIR Brad Peyton **CAST** Dwayne Johnson, Carla Gugino, Kylie Minogue The big disaster event movie of the year has Johnson tackling a magnitude 9 whopper of an earthquake. The Rock claims this to be "the first ever 3D earthquake disaster movie."

MAY UNDATED

84 ABSOLUTELY ANYTHING

DIR Terry Jones **CAST** Simon Pegg, Kate Beckinsale It's another Monty Python reunion as the legendary comedy troupe voice aliens who grant a Brit school teacher (Pegg) magical powers. The late Robin Williams voices a talking dog in Jones's long gestating sci-fi comedy.

85 SUFFRAGETTE

DIR Sarah Gavron **CAST** Carey Mulligan, Meryl Streep, Helena Bonham Carter Chronicling the feminist movement, this drama from Gavron (*Brick Lane*) and writer Abi Morgan (*The Iron Lady*) casts Mulligan as a foot soldier for the cause and Streep as women's lib icon Emmeline Pankhurst.

86 WOMEN HE'S UNDRESSED

DIR Gillian Armstrong **CAST** Jane Fonda, Catherine Martin Gillian Armstrong directs this doco about Australia's most successful unknown Oscar winner, designer Orry-Kelly who costumed the likes of Marilyn Monroe, Bette Davis, Ingrid Bergman and Humphrey Bogart.

JUNE 4

87 ENTOURAGE

DIR Doug Ellin **CAST** Adrian Grenier, Jeremy Piven The layers of Hollywood meta-ness grow deeper as the TV show about a self-involved movie star and his posse becomes a movie. Expect a swag of La La Land cameos and Jeremy Piven swearing lots.

88 INSIDIOUS: CHAPTER 3

DIR Leigh Whannell **CAST** Dermot Mulroney, Lin Shaye, Stefanie Scott Leigh Whannell takes over the reigns from creative partner James Wan in this prequel that more than likely bumps in the night with Lin Shaye (*There's Something About Mary*'s randy bronzed senior Magda) returning as psychic Elise Rainier.

89 PAPER TOWNS

DIR Jake Schreier **CAST** Nat Wolff, Cara Delevingne From the pen of John Green whose YA fiction *The Fault In Our Stars* misted up movie screens last year (and record tissue sales), star of that film Nat Wolff returns as a teen searching for a missing friend.

JUNE 18

90 CAMERON CROWE'S UNTITLED HAWAII PROJECT

DIR Cameron Crowe **CAST** Bradley Cooper, Emma Stone, Rachael McAdams, Jay Baruchel Will this new rom-com be a return to form for Crowe after a few misses? It's got a great start if its stellar cast is anything to go by. Bradley Cooper stars as a military contractor in Hawaii, at the pointy end of something of a love triangle between Rachael McAdams and Emma Stone. Bill Murray plays a billionaire, sorry, *millionaire*. *Absolutely Anything.*

200

MOVIES TO WATCH
IN 2015



91

OUT // TBC 2015

SCRAP SHOOT

STEPHEN DALDRY, RICHARD CURTIS AND ROONEY MARA LITERALLY DODGED BULLETS TO MAKE *TRASH* – A MOVIE THAT THEY INSIST IS FAR MORE THAN 'THE BRAZILIAN SLUMDOG MILLIONAIRE'...

WORDS MATT MUELLER

STEPHEN DALDRY HAS A warning flare to send up: *Trash* is not the film you think it is. It is not, he insists, a film about social justice. It is not out to change the world. And it is not an awards-targeting Exocet of the kind the *Billy Elliot* and *The Hours* helmer has proved himself adept at firing.

"The joy of *Trash* is that there is no expectation of any of that," Daldry tells *Empire* with the tiniest note of defiance, while we look for the wool he's trying to pull over our eyes. Are we really in a room with the Stephen Daldry whose four prior films coughed up 48 Oscar and BAFTA nominations between them? The affable 54-year-old laughs, dragging on a cigarette. "I would say that, quite consciously, this was not made as an awards film," he verifies. "Hopefully, I will be spared any more awards ceremonies in my life."

Daldry's latest is a thriller, dipped in social-realist concerns and spoken mostly in Portuguese, about three street kids waste-picking on a Rio de

Janeiro dump, whose discovery of a wallet funnels them into the path of corrupt politicians and police. It's adapted by Richard Curtis, from Andy Mulligan's acclaimed YA novel — "a family adventure story," as Daldry puts it, "about three boys struggling to find hope for themselves. It was never meant to be more or less than that. At its core, it's a fable about three kids with a treasure map."

If you detect shades of Danny Boyle's big Oscar-winner, you're not the first. But Daldry is quick to caution that "*Slumdog* didn't really have any influence". While Curtis brands *Trash* "Bourne Identity for kids", Daldry sees it as a mash-up: Brazil's Cinema Novo melded with the Hollywood action movie. "[*Bourne* sequels director] Paul Greengrass is a mate and I was like, 'How the fuck do you do this [action] stuff?'" says Daldry. "Paul said, 'It's an accumulation of detail. You need a fuckload of shots, but in the end you've just got to follow the characters and make sure you have the music in your head before you go into it.'" So Daldry started an aural diet of heavy funk-rap from Rio's

favelas, some of which made the movie's soundtrack.

As for Curtis, don't think of him as a soft-edged choice to bring Mulligan's have-nots to the screen: "The great thing is that he's a proper dramaturgical brain," says Daldry. "He laid down the elements we needed to make this story work... It had to be about friendship."

The two men are longtime chums. In 2000, they collaborated on a play about cancelling Third World debt, and when *Trash* first hovered into view, Daldry was toiling on a stage version of *Bridget Jones's Diary*, since consigned to showbiz's own malodorous scrapheap. "We've always liked the cut of each other's jib," says Curtis, whose standing as a Comic Relief founder and anti-poverty campaigner have put him at close quarters with Third World deprivation. "Weirdly, I spend as much time editing brutal three-minute movies about malaria or child abuse as I do my so-called happy, romantic films."

When the project was first assembled, Daldry and Curtis flew to Rio to visit the dumps, prisons and favelas that serve as *Trash*'s focal

points. Scraps of local authenticity crept into the script, including the Rio police sharing their method for extracting information from street urchins: "Pop them in the back of the car and bounce them around for a bit," notes Daldry drily. Villainous coppers do just that to one of *Trash*'s pre-teen heroes, although in a nation where the corruption and brutality of the police is as much an international signifier as Christ The Redeemer, "We're not saying anything new. The kids were telling me all the time about how many family members had been killed [by police]."

The key to unlocking *Trash* was always going to lie in casting its three leads. Enter Brazilian filmmaker Fernando Meirelles, whose outfit O2 Filmes has an established tradition of working with non-professional actors after his breakthrough picture, *City Of God*. It took six months workshopping kids from deprived Rio neighbourhoods until they'd landed on Rickson Tevez (Raphael), Eduardo Luis (Gardo) and Gabriel Weinstein (Rato). Curtis describes *Trash*'s trio as "energetic and

Gabriel Weinstein, Rickson Tevez and Eduardo Luis with their windfall.





Martin Sheen and Stephen Daldry on set.

“IT’S A FABLE ABOUT THREE KIDS AND A TREASURE MAP.”

STEPHEN DALDRY

anarchic”. For Daldry, it was sacrosanct that they effectively ran the show.

“I’ve never done an improvised movie where you don’t understand what’s being improvised: ‘What the fuck are they talking about now?’” he grins. “But at their best, the kids had an infectious energy and humour we managed to capture. We knew they were funny because the Brazilian crew were laughing all the time.”

On their first trip to Brazil, Curtis and Daldry arrived at the notorious landfill Gramacho, since shut down, to observe its pickers and “just see how it all works”. Littered with illegal chemicals, medical waste and the occasional dead body, the appalling conditions meant shooting there wasn’t an option. Instead, the production built its own in a disused quarry outside the city, complete with shanty-town homes and sewage-strewn lagoon, and imported displaced pickers for authenticity. For the rubbish heap of this colossal set, 2,000 cubic metres of recyclable materials were deployed and animal carcasses added to attract vultures, “although we weren’t very successful in that,” admits Daldry. “Only a few showed up... What’s funny is we took months to build this whole fucking thing and then we only shot on it two days.”

But it all fed into the atmosphere of mild chaos Daldry was fostering, mainly to liberate his inexperienced trio from filmmaking’s rigidity. The cast and crew had to be flexible, as when hostilities between local drug militias forced production to a halt. “We had to stop our shooting so they

could finish their shooting,” Daldry quips. “How much real danger we were in is debatable. People get very nervous in Rio. For the kids it was like, ‘What’s the problem? We live with this every day.’”

“I never felt unsafe,” chimes Rooney Mara, who plays NGO volunteer Olivia. Then she promptly regales *Empire* with a story about joining Daldry, producer Kris Thykier and their families at a local football stadium when a gun battle erupted in the stands. It was the actress’ second day in Brazil and she had just dispensed with her bodyguard. Mara chuckles heartily: “And I still didn’t feel like I needed a bodyguard. I mean, I’ve been travelling since I was 17.” One of Daldry’s young daughters came away believing that Mara had saved her life. “Rooney grabbed her and put her to the side while the bullets were flying,” he grins, “so I let her keep believing that.”

Mara and co-star Martin Sheen (as priest Father Juilliard) are only marginally more than incidental to the storyline. But neither Daldry nor Curtis wanted *Trash* to be a crusading-whites-in-shining-armour saga and, with social-justice agendas of their own, both actors were a snug fit. After *Apocalypse Now*, Sheen volunteered near Manila’s trash mountain Payatas, while years before she became famous, Mara founded a charity for underprivileged kids in Kibera, Africa’s largest slum.

“It didn’t feel like acting for me,” Mara says. “That’s one of the things I loved... They were so unaware of the camera and didn’t really care

about acting, although as time went on they started complaining about normal ‘actory’ things like, ‘Oh, my character would never say that.’ And they’re Latin so... they were all in love with me, or at least they said they were.”

Viewing poverty-stricken lives through an alternative lens, *Trash*’s vision doesn’t equate with misery and despair. “Some people in Brazil were like, ‘How can you make a happy, feel-good movie with these characters?’” says Daldry, bristling. “That made me angry. It’s about people from challenged communities, but they’re full of life and hope and energy. If you tell the boys they live in a horrible scenario, they would say, ‘Fuck you.’ They live in the best possible world.”

Of course, Daldry could point to *Slumdog Millionaire* as a film which successfully turned the horrors of poverty into a feel-good winner, but he’s still keen to bury any comparisons... “I think any director gets anxious about comparisons to any other film,” he frowns, countering that it’s Brazilian cinema he’s reflected most boldly. Besides copying shots from the oeuvre of Brazil’s filmmaking crusader Walter Salles (“I told him I was doing it!”), Daldry slipped in a few casting jokes. For example, the actor who portrayed *City Of God*’s hyperviolent L’il Zé becomes, in *Trash*, a kindly gardener. “I suppose if you make a fairytale with poor people, you get compared to *Slumdog*,” sighs the director. “And maybe that’s okay. *Slumdog* was a great movie so I can’t complain.”



JUNE 18 cont.

92 MINIONS

DIR Kyle Balda, Pierre Coffin CAST Michael Keaton, Jon Hamm, Sandra Bullock Set in the 1960s NYC and Mod London, *Despicable Me*’s tiny yellow gibberers embark on a quest to find a new evil master.

93 THE TRANSPORTER LEGACY

DIR Camille Delamarre CAST Ed Skrein, Loan Chabanol It barely seems old enough but time’s relative in Hollywood so here’s another franchise reboot with *Game of Thrones*’s Skrein as Frank Martin The Younger.



JUNE 25

94 TED 2

DIR Seth MacFarlane CAST Mark Wahlberg, Seth MacFarlane, Liam Neeson Speaking of teddies, party bear Ted (MacFarlane) is back with stoner mate (Wahlberg) in toe. Liam Neeson, Amanda Seyfried and Morgan Freeman join them.

JUNE UNDATED

95 LOVE & MERCY

DIR Bill Pohlad CAST Paul Dano, John Cusack, Elizabeth Banks The troubled metamorphosis of Beach Boys legend Brian Wilson played young by Dano and older by Cusack is explored in this biopic.

JULY 2

96 MAGIC MIKE XXL

DIR Gregory Jacobs CAST Channing Tatum, Joe Manganiello The remaining Kings of Tampa (Matthew McConaughey has hung up the g-banger) reunite for a road trip and one final shake of the booty in this sequel that ups the oestrogen level with Elizabeth Banks, Jada Pinkett Smith, Amber Heard and Andie MacDowell joining the cast.

97

OUT || MARCH 12

NEILL BLOMKAMP AND
HIS FELLOW *CHAPPIE*
-CREATORS REVEAL HOW
THEY CONSTRUCTED
THEIR VERY OWN SWEET-
BUT-STREETWISE DROID

WORDS NICK DE SEMLYEN





200 MOVIES TO WATCH IN 2015



BLOMKAMP ON DIE ANTWOORD

The South African electro superstars both star in *Chappie*. Tap to find out which of their videos are director Neill Blomkamp's favourites.



Yolandi (from rap duo Die Antwoord) reads Chappie (Sharlto Copley) a bedtime story.

ROM A
distance,

Neill Blomkamp's Vancouver residence looks like any other. This is not the case. "You arrive at the house and there are little action figures, 12-inch Special Forces guys, hanging by the door and hidden in the trees, ready to shoot you!" says actor Sharlto Copley, the sci-fi director's friend and regular collaborator. Inside, the smirking android probation officer who drove Matt Damon nuts in *Elysium* sits at the head of the dining-room table. "He livens up family dinners," laughs Terri Tatchell, Blomkamp's wife and occasional writing partner. "I have a picture of my mom at Thanksgiving, giving him a hug." Elsewhere in the house are telescopes, Hot Toys figurines, an Alien head, a pet parrot named Ripley and two monstrous remote-controlled helicopters, the ones Blomkamp told *Empire* he wanted when we first spoke in 2009. "I have lots of little ones," he says, "but these have 5,000 RPM turbines

that take jet fuel. I haven't flown them because I worry I'll crash them."

This is the home of a restless, tech-obsessed, furiously creative mind. And it was here, at 3 am one night in the upstairs study, that Blomkamp had an epiphany. "I was up first the next morning," remembers Tatchell. "And he was so excited, he couldn't even get down the stairs without telling me the idea. He leaned over the banister and told me about Chappie."

Chappie, who is named after a South African brand of chewing gum, is a robot. And he's a robot of many parts...

THE OPERATING SYSTEM

Two disparate elements came together in Blomkamp's mind that night. He was chipping away at his screenplay for immigration parable *Elysium*, specifically a scene involving police droids. At the same time, he was blasting a track by hardcore South African rappers Die

Antwoord. "Suddenly, I had a thought: what if this band raised a blank-slate robot as if it was their son?" he says. "The obvious extrapolation is that this robot is going to emulate what its parents are doing. I thought that idea was absolutely hilarious."

With this, his third movie, there's much at stake. *Elysium* did a decent \$286 million worldwide, but got a cooler reception than Blomkamp's debut, *District 9*. Two years on, he admits he too was disappointed with the results. "It was a well-executed, terribly written script," he says. "I got a lot of it right: the design is fucking awesome; the effects are amazing. But ultimately, the most important part, having enough narrative meat for the audience to bite into, I got wrong."

Chappie is his chance to return with a roar. Like *District 9*, it's edgy, funny and set in the dusty swirl of Johannesburg, his place of birth. The R-rated tale of a childlike robot, it's not the easiest sell, but the

director is confident. "I don't know how audiences will respond, but I feel proud of it. This film I feel like I did get right."

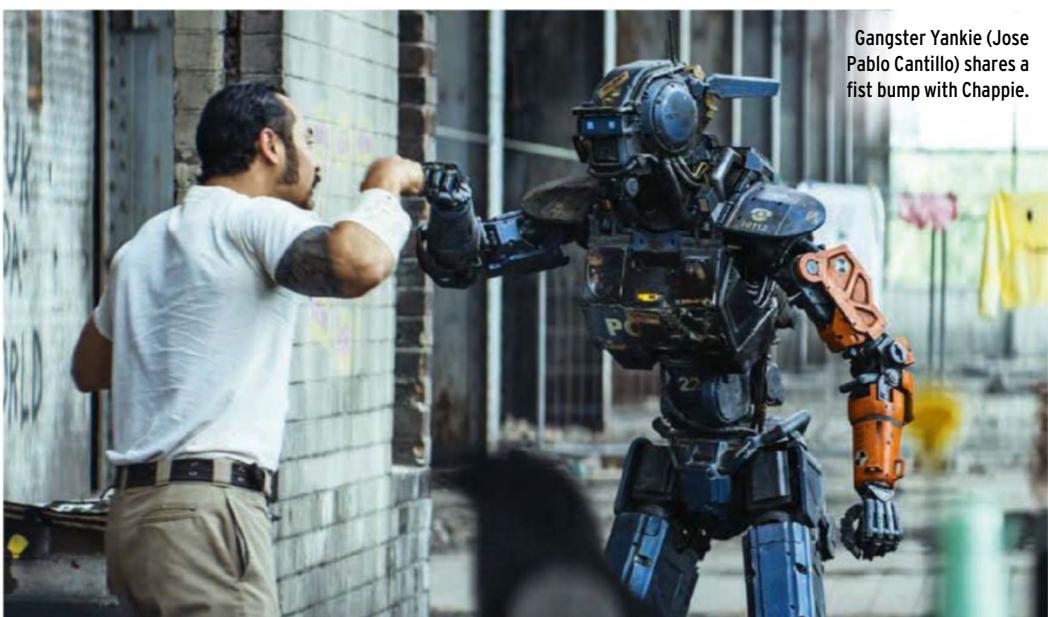
THE HEART

Blomkamp and Tatchell earned an Oscar nomination for their *District 9* script. Then they agreed to never work together again. "We decided home life was much nicer without combining work," chuckles Tatchell, who bought her husband a LEGO robot for Christmas. "But, when he told me about *Chappie*, he didn't even get down the stairs before I said, 'Pleeeeease let me work on it with you!' I instantly fell in love with it."

While Blomkamp injects the science into their screenplays, Tatchell supplies the heart. It was she who insisted 'Little CJ', the child alien, be added to *District 9*, although her husband initially protested over the extra cost. "We have this joke where sometimes I



Director Neill Blomkamp on set with Copley in his robot rabbit costume.



Gangster Yankie (Jose Pablo Cantillo) shares a fist bump with Chappie.

threaten to tie myself to railway tracks over things," she says. "He knows to take me seriously then! And I knew I couldn't work on *D9*, which started out very gun-blazey, unless we brought in that element. Neill would probably roll his eyes to hear me say that he makes fairytales, but for me that's what *District 9* and *Chappie* are. R-rated, science fiction fairytales."

Blomkamp pitches *Chappie* as "E.T. if it was set in Detroit".

Tatchell sees it as more akin to *Pinocchio*. Either way, it's the tale of an innocent trying to stay good in a bad world. "You'll see a hyper-accelerated maturation process," says producer Simon Kinberg.

"From a baby that can't say a word to a being more developed than all the human beings in the movie. He becomes a fully dimensionalised, emotional, complicated... person."

As part of that process, *Chappie* bonds with a dog, learns to paint and gets hooked on He-Man cartoons. "When I was really young,

He-Man was a massive deal to me," explains Blomkamp. "I'd go to the video store, see hundreds of He-Man tapes all lined up, and experience a kind of euphoria." Licensing a 10-second clip of *Masters Of The Universe*, it turns out, is not cheap. "I personally thought it was excessive, what they charged," says Copley. "But he was like, 'Dude, I love it so much, I'm going to have to pay!'"

THE CHASSIS

While the aliens in *District 9* were called prawns, the robot in *Chappie* resembles a bunny. In fact, the design goes back to Blomkamp's 2003 short, *Tetra Vaal*, an 80-second faux documentary about a mecha-cop patrolling Johannesburg. "I wanted the robot to feel functional, real and utilitarian," the director says. "But then I threw those weird rabbit ears on. At the time I was into anime and manga, especially Masamune Shirow. The ears were a

nod to Briareos from *Appleseed*."

A decade on, as he revived and "up-rezzed" his creation, those weird rabbit ears turned out to be surprisingly key. "The design brief was really quite difficult," says Blomkamp. "You have to find a way for a robotic face, which doesn't have human anthropomorphic features, to emote. And that's where, through some pure random fluke, the ears saved us. They could go back when he was scared, or forward when he's angry. They carry a huge amount of emotional weight."

THE SOUL

Copley was *District 9*'s breakout star as weaselly hero Wikus, and his villain Kruger was an *Elysium* highlight (Blomkamp says he hopes to one day make a spin-off "where you just follow this maniac around, like *Grand Theft Auto*"). So, when the director needed someone to bring *Chappie* to life via

JULY 9
98 THE GALLows
DIRS Travis Cluff, Chris Lofing **CAST** Cassidy Gifford, Ryan Shos, Pfeifer Brown Found-footage high school horror from producer Jason Blum, the horror maestro behind franchises *Paranormal Activity*, *Insidious*, *Sinister* and *The Purge*. The beginning of another scream-fest series?

JULY 23
99 POLTERGEIST
DIR Gil Kenan **CAST** Sam Rockwell, Rosemarie DeWitt, Jared Harris Just when you thought it was safe to turn on your TV, they're here, again! Now it could be your iPad that gateways spirits with this update of Tobe Hooper's original (Spielberg produced) 1982 frightener. Here's hoping the new cast have taken out life insurance.

100 TRAINWRECK
DIR Judd Apatow **CAST** Amy Schumer, Daniel Radcliffe, Tilda Swinton Edgy comic Schumer teams with Apatow, writing and starring in this semi-autobiographical comedy about a commitment-phobe and self saboteur.

JULY 30
101 GRIMSBY
DIR Louis Leterrier **CAST** Sacha Baron Cohen, Rebel Wilson, Mark Strong Baron Cohen tests the boundaries of taste again in this '80s comedy caper replete with Oasis mullet as a soccer hooligan on the run with Strong's spy brother.



AUGUST 6
102 LAST CAB TO DARWIN
DIR Jeremy Sims **CAST** Michael Caton, Jackie Weaver Based on a true story turned play, Caton stars as terminally ill Broken Hill cabbie Rex whose journey to Darwin brings unexpected hope in a euthanasia story with humour.

AUGUST 6 cont.

103 SELFLESS

DIR Tarsem Singh **CAST**

Ryan Reynolds, Ben Kingsley, Matthew Goode

Singh, no stranger to freaky-deaky (see *The Cell*), directs this tale of a wealthy, dying man who has his consciousness transferred to another body. A murder mystery unravels.

AUGUST 13

104 RICKI AND THE FLASH

DIR Jonathan Demme **CAST**

Meryl Streep, Kevin Kline

Streep leathers up as an aging rock chick mum by night, check-out chick by day in this comedy drama about dreams and family reconnection. From *Juno* scribe Diablo Cody.

105 STRAIGHT OUTTA COMPTON

DIR F. Gary Gray **CAST** Paul Giamatti, O'Shea Jackson Jr

Biopic about the revolutionary rappers N.W.A. Ice Cube and Dr. Dre produce, Cube's doppelganger son Jackson Jr plays his pop and Giamatti features as the group's manager.

AUGUST 20

106 POINT BREAK

DIR Ericson Core

CAST Luke Bracey, Édgar Ramírez, Teresa Palmer

Almost 25 years on, Kathryn Bigelow's original is given a high octane extreme sports makeover. Aussie Bracey is Johnny Utah, Ramírez is Bodhi. But where's Busey?

AUGUST 27

107 MASTERMINDS

DIR Jared Hess **CAST**

Zach Galifianakis, Owen Wilson, Kristen Wiig, Jason Sudeikis

Napoleon Dynamite's Hess directs



Straight Outta Compton

this bank heist comedy based on 1997's Loomis Fargo robbery in North Carolina, one of the biggest in US history.

SEPTEMBER 3

108 CRIMINAL

DIR Ariel Vromen **CAST**

Ryan Reynolds, Kevin Costner, Tommy Lee Jones

Reynolds is onto something in this, his second consciousness-transplant movie of the year, as a dead CIA operative's memories and skills are implanted into a malignant crim (Costner) to stop a plot.

109 PIXELS

DIR Chris Columbus

CAST Adam Sandler, Josh Gad, Peter Dinklage

Based on the viral video, Sandler stars as an '80s video game champ who leads the fight with fellow arcaders (Dinklage, Gad) against aliens.

110 OUR KIND OF TRAITOR

DIR Susanna White

CAST Ewan McGregor, Naomie Harris, Stellan Skarsgård

Based on John le Carré's novel, an English couple (McGregor, Harris) on vacation become embroiled with a Russian mobster (Skarsgård) desperate to defect.

111 REGRESSION

DIR Alejandro Amenábar

CAST Ethan Hawke, Emma Watson, David Thewlis

The Others lenser Amenábar returns to the thriller genre with Hawke as a detective investigating allegations of a horrific crime against a young woman (Watson) unravelling a disturbing, far-reaching mystery.

SEPTEMBER 17

112 B.O.O.: BUREAU OF OTHERWORLDLY OPERATIONS

DIR Tony Leondis **CAST**

Seth Rogen, Melissa McCarthy, Bill Murray

From Dreamworks Animation comes this *M.I.B.* meets *Ghostbusters* comedy of two spectral agents (Rogen, McCarthy) tasked with shielding humanity from hauntings. Venkman himself voices the chief haunter.



performance-capture, he knew who to call.

"God, it was really something I needed after the villains I've done," says Copley. "The biggest challenge was knowing Chappie was going to be in this gangster environment. Wardrobe is so key for me that I was concerned this tight bodysuit was going to affect my gangster style! So what I did was get a pair of baggy shorts, which I could hang halfway down my arse. Without that, no bullshit, it would have been impossible for me to do it."

Blomkamp has a slightly different take on the matter. "When we did *District 9*, this guy Jason Cope played pretty much every alien. And his genitalia were exposed to some degree, because of the tightness of the leotard, so there was constant mocking from Sharlto and me. I found it interesting that five years later, when Sharlto needed to wear his own suit, he immediately requested shorts. He went, 'It's about the character!' And I was like, 'Yeah, totally. That's what it's about.'"

Tatchell stays out of it, but does heap praise on Copley. "Sharlto's movements make Chappie so vulnerable and real and whole," she says. "There's this incredible moment where he's playing with a Barbie doll. And just the way he tilts his head, you can see the thought process. Sharlto made every sentence better than it was on page."

THE HARDWARE

Back in 2003, Blomkamp pulled off *Tetra Vaal*'s stunning visuals using his laptop, a 3D tracking programme called Boujou and a budget the size of a prawn. So it's no surprise that the Sony-financed *Chappie* looks ridiculously good. "If I could go back and tell my 23-year-old self that a decade later I'd be making a \$50 million feature with that robot," marvels the director, "my brain would explode."

Once again he's collaborated with Image Engine, the Vancouver-based effects house. Blomkamp is a fussy director, not above getting in there and fiddling with a shot



Sparks fly between Chappie and Yolandi.

himself, but the results exceeded even his expectations. "It's really kind of amazing how well they did. On a full-size cinema screen you're watching a robot who appears to have been photographed. I mean, it basically just looks 100 per cent photo-real." Copley, who like Blomkamp has a VFX background, says he's planning to wear a T-shirt during the publicity tour bearing the names of all the artists. "It blew my mind, watching the movie at various times," he says. "Is that a model there? No, no, it definitely was me. It's really, really, really unbelievable CGI on that robot."

Set in 2016, *Chappie* is less of an all-out sci-fi than *District 9* or *Elysium*: we won't see spaceships or futuristic guns. But our chirpy hero automaton will encounter some formidable threats, including mullet-adorned scientist villain Vincent (Hugh Jackman) and the ED-209-esque robot featured in the most recent trailer. "There's big action in the third act," promises Kinberg. "A new element gets unleashed."



Neill Blomkamp gives Hugh Jackman (Vincent) directions to the dunny.

THE BLING

Abducted from his creator Deon (Dev Patel) by street thugs Ninja and Yolandi (Die Antwoord, essentially playing themselves), *Chappie* is caught up in a battle for his soul. "He's a sweet character, but there are moments in the movie where he does things that are illegal," says Kinberg. "He's in a criminal world."

Adorned with graffiti tattoos and pimp-ish medallions, including a big '\$' on a chain, he makes Ultron look like a total square. "I wanted him covered in all that shit," laughs Blomkamp. He asked Ninja to design Chappie's tats: "He's famous for drawing all these crazy little graffiti characters. So I gave him a physical model of Chappie and said, 'Draw on here, whatever you want.' It pissed the art department off a little bit."

Chappie may break bad, but there's one thing he doesn't do: chew gum. "Come to think of it, we don't have any Chappies gum in the film at all," says Tatchell. "We have a teenage daughter, so it stays out of the house, too!"



Back on set, Hugh Jackman is unsure if his mullet was a good idea.



SEPTEMBER 17 cont.

113 BLACK MASS

DIR Scott Cooper **CAST** Johnny Depp, Joel Edgerton, Benedict Cumberbatch, Dakota Johnson Depp ages up and cools down in a *Donnie Brasco* turnaround as Whitey Bulger, the infamously violent Boston mob boss and senator's brother who became an FBI informant.

114 MAZE RUNNER: SCORCH TRIALS

DIR Wes Ball **CAST** Dylan O'Brien, Kaya Scodelario, Thomas Brodie-Sangster, Aiden Gillen The new Young Adult dystopian hit gets a hot-on-the-heels follow up with returning freed Gladers Thomas (O'Brien), Teresa (Scodelario) and Newt (Brodie-Sangster) and *Game Of Thrones*'s Aiden Gillen (Littlefinger) aptly playing villain Rat Man.

SEPTEMBER 24

115 THE BLINKY BILL MOVIE

DIRS Deane Taylor, Alex Stadermann **CAST** Ryan Kwanten, Toni Collette The iconic marsupial is back in a new adventure that sees him and his bush mates journey to the outback to find Blinky's father.

116 THE INTERN

DIR Nancy Meyers **CAST** Anne Hathaway, Robert De Niro De Niro pendulums back to comedy as an old timer hired by Anne Hathaway's fashion website founder as her errand boy. Hopefully given the age gap of the stars this is more com than rom.

OCTOBER 1

117 THE DRESSEMAKER

DIR Jocelyn Moorhouse **CAST** Kate Winslet, Judy Davis, Liam Hemsworth Love meets revenge and haute couture in Moorhouse's adaptation of Rosalie Ham's bestseller with Winslet

playing a glam seamstress whose creations shake up a tiny Aussie town.

118 KITCHEN SINK

DIR Robbie Pickering **CAST** Vanessa Hudgens, Ed Westwick A group of teens team up with vampires and zombies to fight a small town USA alien attack. Awesome.

OCTOBER 8

119 THE WALK

DIR Robert Zemeckis **CAST** Joseph Gordon-Levitt, Charlotte Le Bon, Ben Kingsley High wire artist Philippe Petit's rogue 1974 walk between New York's Twin Towers gets a feature narrative in 3D with Levitt as the plucky Frenchman.

120 VACATION

DIRS John Francis Daley, Jonathan M. Goldstein **CAST** Ed Helms, Christina Applegate, Chris Hemsworth It's *Vacation: Next Gen* as with Helms as Rusty Griswold, Applegate as his wife, Leslie Mann as Aunt Audrey and Chevy Chase and Beverly D'Angelo back as the Griswolds.

OCTOBER 15

121 LEGEND

DIR Brian Helgeland **CAST** Tom Hardy, Emily Browning Hardy plays both Ronnie and Reggie Kray, the twins that terrorised London in the '50s and '60s, in this real-life crime pic.

OCTOBER 22

122 UNTITLED COLD WAR SPY THRILLER

DIR Steven Spielberg **CAST** Tom Hanks, Alan Alda, Amy Ryan Hanks and Spielberg reteam with the true story of James Donovan (Hanks), a CIA sent attorney attempting to have an American pilot released from Soviet Union capture.



123 HITMAN: AGENT 47

OUT | AUGUST 27

PLAYERS Rupert Friend, Zachary Quinto, Aleksander Bach (director)

PLOT The genetically engineered, barcoded assassin Agent 47 (Friend) teams up with a target (Hannah Ware) and discovers secrets about both of their pasts. Kind of like *Who Do You Think You Are*, only shootier.

PITCH "I strongly believe in character-driven movies." This isn't the sort of statement you might expect from a commercials director adapting a video game, but Aleksander Bach is completely convincing as he explains his passion for bald-headed, cold-blooded killer Agent 47 on set in Berlin. "47 is prepared for everything, but maybe not for human emotion. So this is the challenge, this makes this character so complex and interesting. He is the perfect antihero for me."

PITFALLS? The wobbly 2007 Timothy Olyphant film may leave some stench on this reboot.

PAY-OFF Done right, this could find 47 re-Bourne, a la 0047. **NP**



124 JUPITER ASCENDING

OUT | FEBRUARY 19

PLAYERS Channing Tatum, Mila Kunis, Sean Bean, Eddie Redmayne, Andy and Lana Wachowski (directors)

PLOT A Cinderella story, of sorts. Kunis is a destitute human woman sentenced to termination by the Queen Of The Universe. With the help of ex-military alien Caine (Tatum), her destiny could be very different.

PITCH "We had something like 180 set-pieces, including big location shoots," boasts producer Grant Hill, confirming the visual effects and stunt work outdoes even *The Matrix* films. "We built more sets so that the actors were in a real environment," he insists. "Combined with the overall design, the stand-out are the performances."

PITFALLS? There have been delays and, perhaps unfairly, bad buzz.

PAY-OFF Squabbling aliens, human-animal genetic twiddling, a Vaderish Eddie Redmayne and a Yodaish Sean Bean, what's not to like? **IN**

125 IN THE HEART OF THE SEA

OUT || MARCH 19

PLAYERS Chris Hemsworth, Cillian Murphy, Tom Holland, Benjamin Walker, Ron Howard (director)

PLOT Like Melville's *Moby Dick*, this is based on the attack of the whaling ship, the Essex, on the Pacific Ocean in November 1820, by a giant sperm whale.

PITCH "He's kind of like Clint Eastwood," says visual effects supervisor Jody Johnson about the Big Bad in *In The Heart Of The Sea*. "He's a high plains drifter. He comes and helps out [*his own kind*], but he's a bit of a sociopath as well."

Based on Nathaniel Philbrick's 2000 award-winning non-fiction

account of the event, Ron Howard's huge production revels in both action set-pieces and thematic meat.

Among those playing the survivors of the Essex are Chris Hemsworth (first mate), Benjamin Walker (captain), Cillian Murphy (second mate) and Tom Holland (cabin boy), who spent weeks bobbing in a lifeboat in a vast water tank at Leavesden studios.

"These guys were sure there was something supernatural about the whale," says Howard. "It was such a shocking idea that a whale would successfully turn on a ship and put them in this kind of peril. They just



kept trying to reconcile it on some spiritual cosmic level. I think that's an interesting lead to take."

"All the other whales are scared of him," says Johnson. "He's got a terrible skin condition and scars from any number of battles with whalers, squids and other whales. We don't want him to become a monster. He's just an animal with a

big history. It's treading that fine line so we can tell this story without going over the top."

PITFALLS? Hard to pin one down: great team, great cast, classic tale, canny use of VFX and mammoth physical pieces. As Howard says, in terms of scale the whale "is King Kong, not Bruce the shark".

PAY-OFF See above. **IF**



SEA THE TRAILER
Tap here to see the trailer for *In The Heart Of The Sea*.



126 THE MAN FROM U.N.C.L.E.

OUT || AUGUST 13

PLAYERS Henry Cavill, Armie Hammer, Alicia Vikander, Hugh Grant, Elizabeth Debicki, Guy Ritchie (co-writer/director).

PLOT During the Cold War, the USA and Russia put aside their animosity to tackle a mysterious new enemy. But the agents they choose to unite, Napoleon Solo (Cavill) and Illya

Kuryakin (Hammer), are not happy about becoming a double-act.

PITCH There is no shortage of spies in cinema. Bond is in rude health, *Mission: Impossible* is about to disprove its title for a fifth time. But there is a gap, which *U.N.C.L.E.* could fill, for a larkier, more swaggering series, although

Kingsman may have got there first. Guy Ritchie isn't clinging to the original show but starting his own version, conjuring an origin story that the TV series never explored. "I wasn't a huge fan of the show, so that wasn't the attraction," says Ritchie. "But the same way as something sparked when *Sherlock Holmes* was

suggested to me, I instantly felt like I had a contemporary spin on it." If he can do for this what he did for Holmes then we're in business.

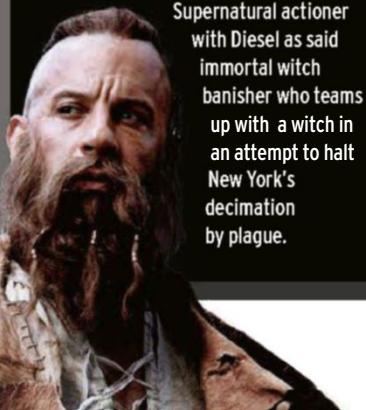
PITFALLS? The show is now 50 years old. Will the name attract the interest of younger viewers?

PAY-OFF Putting the 'cool' into *U.N.C.L.E.* **OR**

OCTOBER 22 cont.
130 THE LAST WITCH HUNTER

DIR Breck Eisner **CAST** Vin Diesel, Elijah Wood, Michael Caine

Supernatural actioner with Diesel as said immortal witch banisher who teams up with a witch in an attempt to halt New York's decimation by plague.



OCTOBER 29
131 SCOUTS VS ZOMBIES

DIR Christopher Landon **CAST** Tye Sheridan, David Koechner, Patrick Schwarzenegger
The name says it all with a boy scout troupe up for a collective badge in Zombie Cranial Evisceration and the Austrian Oak's sapling playing the rival jock.

OCTOBER UNDATED
132 THE PERFECT GUY
DIR David M. Rosenthal

CAST Michael Ealy, Sanaa Lathan
Reminiscent of *Fatal Attraction*, the plot sees a career woman (Lathan) fall for a seemingly perfect man (Ealy).

NOVEMBER 12
133 FRIDAY THE 13TH
DIR David Bruckner **CAST** TBC
Heeeeeere's Jason! Creepily, this latest reboot is the masked psycho's 13th time a-stabbin' on celluloid... but set to release on Thursday the 12th? C'mon film marketing people, do we have to think of *everything* for you guys?

134 ROCK THE KASBAH

DIR Barry Levinson **CAST** Bill Murray, Bruce Willis, Kate Hudson
Comedy with Murray as a has-been music exec stranded on a USO tour in Kabul who discovers a young girl with an extraordinary voice.

NOVEMBER 26
135 HOTEL TRANSYLVANIA 2

DIR Genndy Tartakovsky **CAST** Adam Sandler, Mel Brooks
Comedy legend Brooks joins the voice



127 PAN OUT | SEPTEMBER 10

PLAYERS Hugh Jackman, Garrett Hedlund, Joe Wright (director)

PLOT The origin stories of Peter Pan (Miller) and Captain Hook (Hedlund), in which Peter is kidnapped and taken to Neverland. Here he will meet James Hook, and begin a friendship that may not last.

PITCH At last, Brit director Joe Wright (*Anna Karenina*, *Hanna*) is going full fantasy, putting away adult things for an epic expansion of J.M. Barrie's enchanted world. "The scale is vastly bigger than anything we have done before," says producer Paul Webster, "but still with that handmade quality you get with Joe." There may be effects galore, but Wright has insisted on creating Neverland as 'real' sets: labyrinthine forests, trippy villages and full-scale pirate galleons. Staying true to the framework of Barrie's fable, screenwriter Jason Fuchs has a host of new ideas. It is now 1940 and the Blitz, while wildest of all is a demented Hugh Jackman as Blackbeard, a piratical fiend in a dress.

PITFALLS? Last time we got a sequel to a beloved children's story it was *Oz: The Great And Powerful*.

PAY-OFF Wright doing a state-of-the-art panto with a lunatic Jackman? There are some happy thoughts for you. **IN**



128 THE HUNGER GAMES: MOCKINGJAY – PART 2

OUT | NOVEMBER 19

PLAYERS Jennifer Lawrence, Josh Hutcherson, Julianne Moore, Donald Sutherland, Francis Lawrence (director)

PLOT With Peeta (Hutcherson) rescued from the grips of the Capitol but damaged, it's time for Katniss (Lawrence) to lead Panem's final stand against its oppressors. And not everyone will make it out alive.

PITCH If *Mockingjay – Part 1* was the quiet, then this is definitely the storm. In Panem it's now total war, and Francis Lawrence plans to make it real and hard and dirty. "When I was making *Catching Fire* I was looking at Vietnam film references — *Apocalypse Now, Platoon*," he says. "But for this, I looked at World War I, World War II and just [today's] news. No films for this one."

PITFALLS? The final instalment in Suzanne Collins's series is heavy with misery. Can all that doom translate into an enjoyable blockbuster?

PAY-OFF The Mockingjay's final flight. **OR**

129 MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 5

OUT | DECEMBER 26

PLAYERS Tom Cruise, Simon Pegg, Sean Harris, Jeremy Renner, Rebecca Ferguson, Christopher McQuarrie (director)

PLOT Ethan Hunt (Cruise) returns for another undertaking with the Impossible Missions Force. No story

details as yet, but you can probably bet on them saving the world.

PITCH Having provided rewrites on last instalment *Ghost Protocol*, Christopher McQuarrie steps into the big chair, directing his *Jack Reacher* and *Valkyrie* star. It's his biggest picture by a distance, but the pair's rapport is obvious. He's an old-school action man and their last collaboration (*McQuarrie rescripted Edge Of Tomorrow*) resulted in one of the most enjoyable movies of 2014. Pegg played a more important



role in part four, Ving Rhames is returning and Brit-Swede rising star Rebecca Ferguson (from BBC series *The White Queen*) should break out. But these films could do with a terrific villain... and the addition of Sean Harris raises hopes for that. McQuarrie has described *Five* (it's yet to get a sub-moniker) as a "love letter to fans of the series".

PITFALLS? It opens a week after *Star Wars*. Bold move. But then, Ethan Hunt likes a challenge...

PAY-OFF Mission: Irrepressible. **NP**



cast as Dracula's (Sandler) Dad Vlad in the sequel to the 2012 animated hit, 40 years after directing his supernatural spoof *Young Frankenstein*.

136 MIDNIGHT SPECIAL DIR Jeff Nichols CAST Adam Driver, Kirsten Dunst, Joel Edgerton
After *Take Shelter* and *Mud*, director Nichols goes for a quality film trifecta with this self-penned science fiction thriller about a father who discovers his young son has supernatural powers, forcing the pair to go on the run.

DECEMBER 3 137 JEM AND THE HOLOGRAMS

DIR Jon M. Chu CAST Molly Ringwald, Juliette Lewis

The cult '80s cartoon gets a future-fit, with the musical fantasy of a teen girl and her friends on the road to superstardom now set in the social media age.

DECEMBER 3 138 SETH ROGEN CHRISTMAS MOVIE

DIR Jonathan Levine CAST Seth Rogen,

Joseph Gordon-Levitt, Anthony Mackie
The team behind cancer 'comedy' 50/50 debaucherise Christmas as a trio of friends on Christmas Eve in New York City hunt for the 'Nutcracka Ball'. Geddit?

139 ALVIN & THE CHIPMUNKS 4 DIR Raja Gosnell CAST TBC
Despite a veil of secrecy (and an audience likely not clamouring for scoops) we wager the fourth instalment will involve Alvin singing a pop song in a shrill voice.

200
MOVIES TO WATCH
IN 2015

140

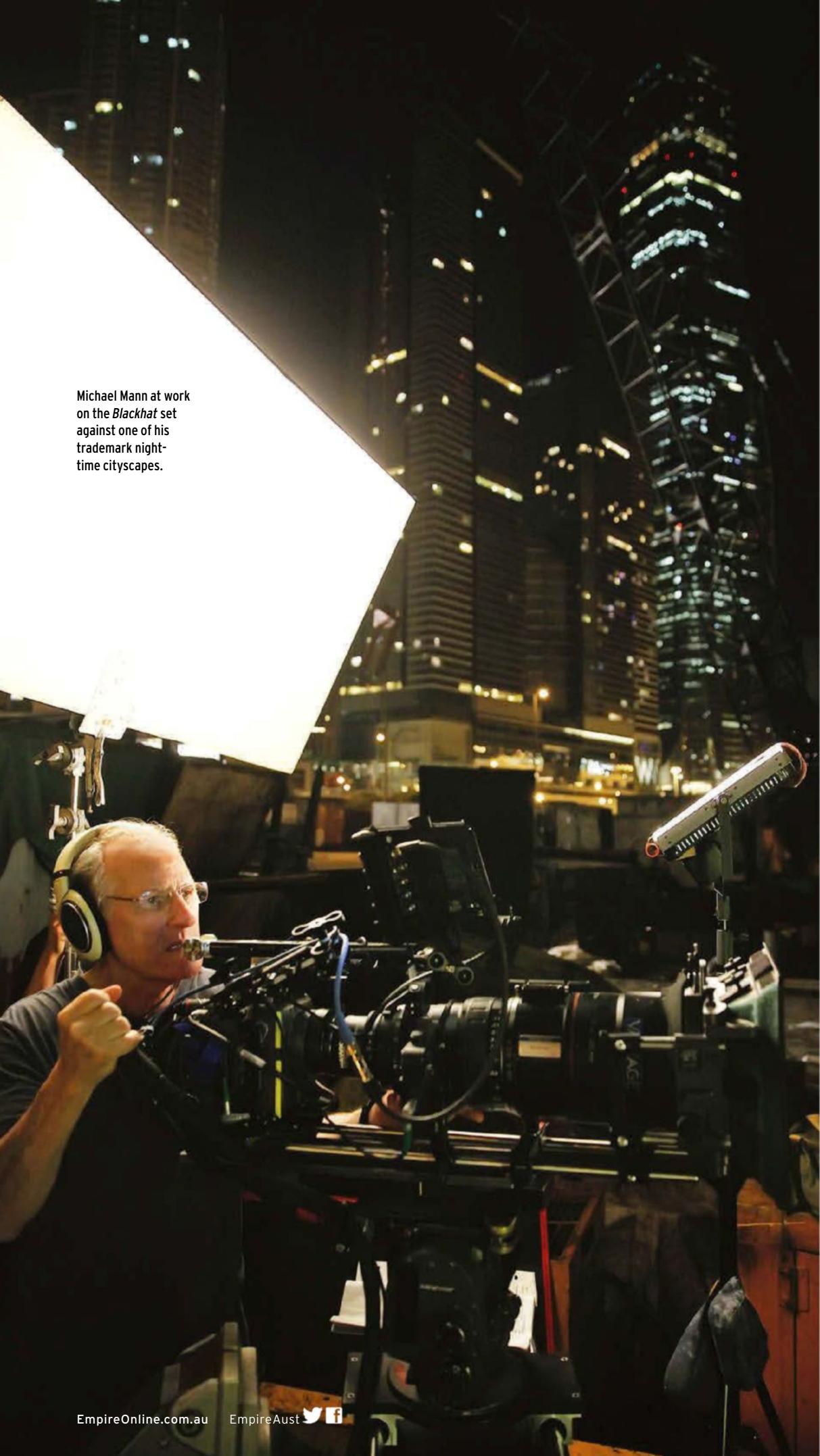
OUT || ON HOME FORMATS JUNE 22*

DEEP
CRIMINAL



WITH HIS SLICK CYBER-THRILLER *BLACKHAT*
UPLOADING THIS YEAR, WE DECODE MICHAEL MANN

WORDS IAN NATHAN



Michael Mann at work on the *Blackhat* set against one of his trademark night-time cityscapes.

IT'S OPEN ON A SKYLINE.

A city by night: Chicago, New York, Miami, all those quivering rivers of light that crisscross Los Angeles — take your pick. This is the quintessential American metropolis, where every Vincent Hanna thwarts a

Neil McCauley. The effect is mesmerising, almost sci-fi. Yet beyond the impeccable eye of the director, there's not a single special effect at work.

"I don't know. I like cities. Probably because I grew up in Chicago, and I liked the city better by night," says Michael Mann, struggling to fully express his affinity for urban nightscapes. He tries again. "I respond to it. If I am there looking at a city by night, and it is glowing, it feels magical. That is probably where the inspiration comes from. Then trying to realise that, it becomes a craft issue."

In Mann's latest movie, a strikingly topical cyber-thriller named *Blackhat*, the drama locates to Hong Kong. Can you imagine what the teeming Chinese megalopolis offers his predilections? After sunset, he lets his lens linger on the Fragrant Harbour, aglow with the molten highways of a trillion headlights.

Mann always conjures something mythical from what he sees. His work dwells at an intersection of reality and movies. Beyond that, it is a craft issue.

FIVE YEARS HAVE PASSED SINCE the mixed response to *Public Enemies*. For some, the digitally shot period epic felt too clinical, Johnny Depp's bank-robbing John Dillinger too remote. Still, no-one has ever caught the flare of a snarling Thompson better, or brought such crisp modernity to the gaudy melodrama of the old-school gangster movie. In the meantime, he's hardly been idle. That just doesn't happen.

During 2011, Mann returned to his proving ground of television for slow-burning horse-racing drama *Luck*, but beset by animal safety issues it was abruptly cancelled. He has any number of movie and television projects at various stages of development, but the truth is, he needs to be sure. Once he's got that film in his head, there won't be space for anything else. ▶

200 MOVIES TO WATCH IN 2015



Chris Hemsworth's Hathaway mid-Jakartan festival shootout.

"He is so particular about what he is making and unless it really speaks to him, he is not going to do it," confirms Chris Hemsworth. "He is just unable to compromise. This is his vision." Hemsworth is the latest star to play one of Mann's flawed, masculine heroes. *Blackhat's* Nicholas Hathaway is a convicted hacker, another of the director's noble cons, offered a reprieve if he helps hunt a cyber terrorist whose digital penetration has so far set off an explosion at a Chinese nuclear plant and sent chaos across US financial markets.

So yes, here's a Hollywood movie about criminal hacking being released just after hackers have beset a major studio. "Two years ago anybody doing the same research that we did, meeting the same people, would have come to the conclusion that everything is vulnerable," notes Mann, unwilling to get into the specifics of Sony Pictures' recent travails. Still, the relevance is not lost on him. "We are topical by accident."

The question of where Mann's movies come from is not easy to answer. It is more often about the subject matter than plot or genre. He is categorised as a master of the crime film: *Thief*, *Manhunter*, *Public Enemies*. *Heat* stands as one of the great studio pictures of the '90s. *Blackhat* could be read as a new



Chen Dawai (Leehom Wang), security head and Hathaway's uni mate.

141 JOY
DIR David O. Russell
CAST Jennifer Lawrence, Bradley Cooper, Robert De Niro
It's an unlikely *Silver Linings Playbook* reunion with this true story of Joy Mangano (Lawrence) who became one of the US's most successful entrepreneurs after inventing the Miracle Mop.

2015 UNDATED
142 5 TO 7
DIR Victor Levin CAST

Anton Yelchin, Berenice Marlohe, Glenn Close
Novelist Brian begins a romance with Arielle (Marlohe), a French diplomat's wife, but they can only carry out their dalliance in the hours between work and home. Here's to you, time-poor Mrs. Robinson.

143 25 APRIL
DIR Leanne Pooley
CAST TBC
After documenting Kiwi lesbian

country and western singers, then Hilary and Norgay's Everest ascent, Pooley turns her attention to the Battle of Gallipoli with an animated docu-drama.

144 A BIGGER SPLASH
DIR Luca Guadagnino
CAST Dakota Johnson, Ralph Fiennes
It may sound like a *Carry On* comedy but this is a crime thriller based on the 1969 French *La Piscine* about an Italian vacation



Autobahn.



NIGHT MANN
Tap here to check out a gallery of Michael Mann's beautiful city nightscapes across several films.



Wei Tang as Chen's trusted sister Lien, who helps pursue the mysterious hacker.

love triangle that predictably leads to tragedy.

145 AUTOBAHN DIR Eran Creevy
CAST Nicholas Hoult, Anthony Hopkins
Auto actioner with Hoult as a young Turk involved in a heist gone wrong, now on the skids across Germany from a mob boss (Hopkins) to save his in peril girlfriend (Felicity Jones.)

146 BOYCHOIR DIR François Girard
CAST Dustin Hoffman, Kathy Bates
Scarred small town boy Stet (Garrett Wareing) clashes with his new school's choir master Carvelle (Hoffman) with the disciplinarian pushing the angelic voiced Stet to channel his feelings into music. More *Mr. Holland's Opus* than the pummeling *Whiplash*.

diversion in an old game. But he doesn't join the dots of his films. Crime is just a context.

Every new film is a clean slate. And a process of full immersion. On *The Last Of The Mohicans*, he famously roughed it in the wild with Daniel Day-Lewis as they both sought the authentic 18th-century pioneer experience. On *Collateral* he rode with taxi drivers, seeking the rhythms of their nightly encounters.

As he does with all his movies, on *Blackhat* Mann created a brain trust of specific expertise. He sought out criminals, including Kevin Poulsen, now senior editor at *Wired* magazine, but a former 'blackhat' (unauthorised) hacker who spent five years in prison for, among multiple cyber sins, fixing an LA radio station competition so he could win a Porsche. Mann also found the cops, including LA-based digital forensics expert Michael Panico, a former FBI agent who headed up the bureau's cyber crime unit for several years.

Panico recalls how, following an explanation, Mann would want to go over it again. "He would pick at

something that didn't make sense or wasn't consistent," he laughs. "He would ask me to identify places where I was giving him shorthand, and he'd press for the detail." He needed to know everything, from the global ramifications of cybercrime to the nature of transistors, 16 atoms wide. It was while on a research trip to Washington, D.C. in August 2011 that the basic idea of the script occurred to him. He loved the notion that the hacker stereotype of the "skinny white kid in his parents' basement" was outdated. Stephen Watt, a Wall Street computer analyst who did two years for his part in stealing data from 45.7 million credit cards in the TJX (parent of T.K. Maxx) hack, is a 215cm bodybuilder with blond dreadlocks. So casting Thor as a computer geek was entirely rational. And like Poulsen, Mann found that convicted hackers would regularly turn informant.

"It is terrific when you research an area and talk to people and that triggers a story," says Mann. "But it always begins with the characters for me. How do they think? Who is this

MICHAEL MANN'S DEDICATION to reality is by his own account "total". His M.O. is to bend it to the will of moviemaking; like cities in the night, something real and dreamlike at the same time. His explanation is almost poetic: "I find that when you access the current and move with the way things really happen, you encounter things that are more moving and have unexpected outcomes than I could fictionalise in a room in Los Angeles. In particular, locations talk to me a lot."

While a story of hackers, *Blackhat* gets out from behind the keyboard and onto the streets. There is full-bore action: shoot-outs, car chases, visceral explosions. Characters walk across runways to private jets, pausing to take in the distant horizon (classic Mann). The template is global: Los Angeles, Hong Kong, Jakarta, Kuala Lumpur. And being a Michael Mann joint, they shot entirely on location. "It is so much more exciting for the actors to be on Woosung Street and look

"I'M INTERESTED IN A HIGHER DEGREE OF DIFFICULTY." **MICHAEL MANN**

guy? What are the impulses inside of him? What is that moment of exaltation? How does he talk? How does he say hello to a girl?" On a good day, he can think like his characters. Although, listening to the director speak, and recalling the purposeful, quasi-philosophical dialogue from *Heat*'s Neil McCauley, *Collateral*'s Vincent or *The Insider*'s Lowell Bergman, you wonder whether it is the characters who think like Michael Mann.

"I had to go to school," laughs Hemsworth, who had never experienced preparation like it. "We went to prisons and spent time with guys doing time, to understand the psychology of what they are going through. And then I went to the Chicago Board Of Trade and places like that. And I did computer lessons for four days a week with Chris McKinlay from UCLA. We spent two-and-a-half months doing that, and Michael kept asking, 'So, do you know how to write code?'"

out the window, and see a real street out there with all the neon, all that activity, all for real."

He wants actors to walk on set and feel the heat around the corner. By any standards it is way more challenging to shut down one of the compressed arteries of Hong Kong than a street in Los Angeles, but the rewards are worth it. "I respond to the challenge with enthusiasm," he says, sounding as if he is quoting one of his antiheroes. "I am interested in a higher degree of difficulty with a higher reward."

Mann doesn't talk about filmmaking heroes or specific inspirations. Rather, he is enthused by filmmaking. It is about concepts, not styles. "A million years ago I was studying film and I was very aware of the work Sergei Eisenstein did with [Russian composer] Prokofiev. Not that I wanted to work with Prokofiev, but the idea of it, the idea of planning, of composition, scale, the flow of it, the sculpture of film

200 MOVIES TO WATCH IN 2015

Ritchie Coster as
key villainous
henchman Kassar.



Surprising levels of
gymnastics are required
to capture Hemsworth
mid-hack.

“MICHAEL IS AN INTIMIDATING GUY, YOU KNOW?” **CHRIS HEMSWORTH**

through time, to borrow a quote from Eisenstein.”

When Mann first got out of film school, he went to work for 20th Century Fox and was briefly assigned as a PA to the legendary George Cukor, who was prepping a movie in London. Cukor didn't have a work permit at the time, so there was a local director standing in for him as actresses were tested. “Nothing was happening,” Mann recalls, “and he very graciously asked [the local director] if he minded if he had a word with her.”

Cukor must have spoken to the actress for no more than 12 or 13 seconds, and Mann never knew what he said, but all of a sudden she got up in front of the camera and was brilliant. “That is what you were supposed to be able to do,” Mann urges. “You are supposed to be able to open the door in your direction. Imagine yourself outside of that experience, when you tell an actor, ‘Less of that, more of this...’ No, you have to be able to say the right thing that works for that actor or actress.”

Chris Hemsworth is a huge fan: *The Last Of The Mohicans* and *Heat* had a powerful effect on him. He'd heard the stories about Mann's process. People were telling him to get ready. But you can never be ready. “You welcome the challenge,” he says, “but at times you think, ‘Jeez, am I going to make it out of this thing?’ He is an intimidating guy, you know? He leaves no stone unturned.”

Like David Fincher, Mann likes take after take, pushing actors to their limit. You could say it was

another form of research, probing for the reality of the scene. On *Blackhat* they could get up to 40 or 50 takes. Not quite Kubrickian levels of intensity, but any collaborator needs to get onto the director's wavelength. There are rumours that serial improviser Depp struggled to cope on *Public Enemies*.

“To me, that number is relative to the actor,” says Mann, who really doesn't see what the fuss is about. “Pacino routinely hits it between takes seven and 10. You rarely go past that number; sometimes it is take two or three. It is different for different folks. There is a groove you get into when you do a thing, do a thing, do a thing and that sometimes frees up an actor.”

Hemsworth describes a point of exhaustion where you no longer know what the scene is about. You just give up. You let go. “That was an interesting experience for me, the letting go part of the process,” he admits. “You can't fake that. That sort of exhaustion I guess is when really interesting things start to happen. It is definitely extreme. But how can you fault it?”

On the second-to-last day of a shoot that ate up 75 locations in 64 days, they filmed for 22 hours non-stop on the frenzied streets of Hong Kong. Having finally got to bed, four-and-a-half hours later Hemsworth's phone rings. It is Mann on the other end of the line, huffing and puffing. “I was like, ‘Michael what are you doing?’” the actor laughs in amazement. “And he says, ‘I'm in the gym. Anyway I need you to come in early.’ I just thought, ‘Wow, this is an animal.’”

Mann laughs it off as a genetic accident, but his stamina levels border on the uncanny. He's 71 and he works out every day while shooting, seemingly inexhaustible in pursuit of his movie. You're reminded of Vincent Hanna's line from *Heat*: “All I am is what I'm going after.” No-one works harder. “The dedication, the attention to detail,” marvels Panico. “He ran rings around us all.”

Whenever he can, Mann operates the camera himself. He enjoys it, but on a keener level, say in a tight dialogue sequence, he knows he can anticipate where the reactions will come in with an almost subliminal tightening of the zoom. He likens it to a duet. Plus, Mann has an intuitive bond with his team of three regular operators. “I don't even have to say anything,” he says with satisfaction.

ACCORDING TO MICHAEL MANN, when it comes to the edit a film doesn't change, but in its heart and soul it realises what its ambition was. He may move scenes around, put something from the middle at the front, but really that is just another way of getting to where it was trying to take him from the beginning.

You wonder if he thinks any of his films has fully realised its ambition. A Rosetta Stone that unlocks Mann. Predictably, it's a difficult question. That magnificent obsession in the heat of their making dwindles over time; he can only observe them more clinically now.

"It probably changes from time to time," he admits finally. "There have been a couple of articles in the last couple of months about *Collateral*. Suddenly people have started looking at it again. I happened to look and I would be lying if I said I was displeased. There is not much that I would change. For me the test is whenever the next new format arrives when I look at the film and decide if I want to change anything. On some of them like *Heat* and *The Insider*, I don't want to change a thing."

Collateral is a unique case. It was roused not from years of development, but almost by impulse. Paramount offered it to him at the point he finally admitted to himself that his heart wasn't in *The Aviator* anymore and he passed that to Martin Scorsese. After *Ali* he needed a break from the biopic. "The basic story within *Collateral*, the actual structure, is quite brilliant," he says of the fanciful killer-in-a-cab scenario he was handed. "I didn't like the setting, I didn't like the dialogue, I didn't like who the characters were, but if you put that screenplay in an MRI, the bones were brilliant. So I changed everything on the surface, but I changed nothing about the structure. It is a great piece of invention."

What we can take from this is that for all his sophistication, Mann has Hollywood bones. But it requires all of his attention. "My focus has to be pretty singular on a movie that I am working on," he admits, "and as much as I think I should be able to generate more than one thing at a time, and I really want to be able to go from one thing to the next, I consistently fail." At this, Mann gives a rueful chuckle. As an interviewee, he may be serious and challenging, but he has a good earthy laugh.

***AS WE WENT TO PRESS BLACKHAT WAS PULLED FROM THEATRICAL RELEASE.**



Quentin holds court at a script reading in 2014.

147 THE HATEFUL EIGHT

OUT || 2015 TBC

PLAYERS Samuel L. Jackson, Kurt Russell, Jennifer Jason Leigh, Walton Goggins, Tim Roth, Michael Madsen, Kurt Russell, Demián Bichir, Bruce Dern, Quentin Tarantino (director)

PLOT Bounty hunters (Russell, Jackson), a fugitive (Jason Leigh), a sheriff (Goggins) and more are holed up in a snowed in trading post in a post-Civil War Wyoming. Channing Tatum may arrive.

PITCH First it was leaked, then staged live, now Tarantino's oft discussed script finally meets celluloid, capping off his rewritten-historical trilogy. Expect a luxuriant build of tension amid lashings of Tarantino dialogue and mucho claret.

PITFALLS? Well, the script was leaked, so for the ingloriously curious, the reveal may not match the hype.

PAY-OFF What a cast! Plus, QT's written two new endings to confound said leak and, as *Django Unchained* proved, he rules The West. **DM**



148 THE 9TH LIFE OF LOUIS DRAX

OUT || 2015 TBC

PLAYERS Jamie Dornan, Sarah Gadon, Aaron Paul, Barbara Hershey, Alexandre Aja (director)

PLOT A boy, the eponymous Louis (Aiden Longworth) is in a coma, experiencing fantastical visions. Dr. Allan Pascal (*Fifty Shades*' Mr Grey, Jamie Dornan) is trying to rouse him.

PITCH Max Minghella inherited Liz Jensen's 2004 novel adaptation from his deceased dad and has written the screenplay. Everyone on the Vancouver set describes it as a supernatural Hitchcockian thriller.

PITFALLS? Kid in a coma? Could it be *Insidious*-lite?

PAY-OFF Director Aja (*The Hills Have Eyes*) knows the creepy. **JW**

2015 UNDATED cont.

149 BROOKLYN

DIR John Crowley

CAST Saoirse Ronan, Domhnall Gleeson, Emory Cohen

A 1950s Brooklyn tale of Irish immigrant Nora (Ronan), torn between two men (Gleeson, Cohen) and two countries.

150 CAROL

DIR Todd Haynes

CAST Rooney Mara, Cate Blanchett, Kyle Chandler

Haynes (*Far From Heaven*) revisits the '50s with this adaptation of novella *The Price of Salt*, a NYC drama of the relationship between two women.

151 CROUCHING TIGER, HIDDEN DRAGON: THE GREEN LEGEND

DIR Woo-ping Yuen

CAST Michelle Yeoh, Jason Scott Lee

Netflix's first foray into original features is largely bypassing distribution to cinemas. Yeoh returns as warrior Yu Shu Lien.

152 DESERT DANCER

DIR Richard Raymond

CAST Reece Ritchie, Freida Pinto

The true story of Afshin Ghaffarian (Ritchie) who formed a dance company in Iran despite the nation's outlawing of dancing.

153 THE DISAPPEARANCE OF ELEANOR RIGBY

DIR Ned Benson

CAST Jessica Chastain, James McAvoy

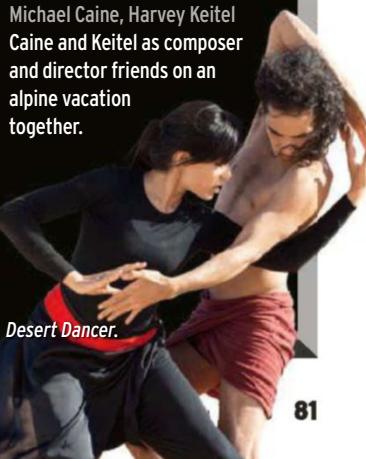
The breakdown of a young woman and her marriage told from his (McAvoy) and her (Chastain) unique perspectives.

154 THE EARLY YEARS

DIR Paolo Sorrentino

CAST Michael Caine, Harvey Keitel

Caine and Keitel as composer and director friends on an alpine vacation together.

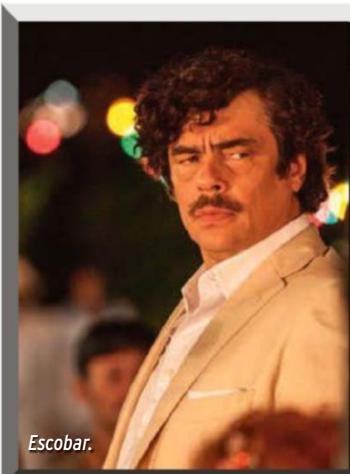


Desert Dancer.



155 THE SECOND BEST EXOTIC MARIGOLD HOTEL

OUT || FEBRUARY 26



Escobar.

2015 UNDATED cont.
158 **EFFIE GRAY**
 DIR Richard Laxton
 CAST Dakota Fanning, Greg Wise
 Emma Thompson's take on the loveless Victorian-era marriage of Euphemia Gray (Fanning) and art critic John Ruskin (Wise).

159 **ELSA & FRED**
 DIR Michael Radford CAST
 Shirley MacLaine, Christopher Plummer
 Hollywood vets MacLaine and Plummer are Elsa and Fred, in a late-life romance on borrowed time who take a sojourn to Italy.

160 **ESCOBAR: PARADISE LOST**
 DIR Andrea Di Stefano CAST Benicio Del Toro, Josh Hutcherson, Claudia Traisac
 A naïve surfer (Hutcherson) meets the girl of his dreams (Traisac) in Columbia only to get caught in the crossfire of her uncle, a drug tsar named Pablo Escobar (Del Toro).

161 **FALLEN**
 DIR Scott Hicks CAST Addison Timlin, Jeremy Irvine, Harrison Gilbertson
 We've had vampires, werewolves and dystopic teen rebels, now welcome angels



Far From Men.

PLAYERS Judi Dench, Maggie Smith, Celia Imrie, Bill Nighy, Dev Patel, Richard Gere, John Madden (director)

PLOT Set eight months after the first film, *The Second Best...* is being talked up as a companion piece, a continuation of the lives of the 70-going-on-18-year-olds who won hearts and almost 22 million Australian box-office dollars in 2013.

Joining Dench, Bill Nighy, Celia Imrie and Ronald Pickup as the hotel guests are Tamsin Greig, researching retirement homes, and Richard Gere as an American writer — one of whom might be a hotel inspector investigating Sonny and Muriel as they look to open a second establishment.

PITCH On set in India, *Empire* watched Patel's Sonny undertake a roll call, an innovation to check if any residents died during the night. For all the focus on the legendary cast members, Patel is the first name on the call sheet, a sign of how important his comedic energy is to the mix. "The first one was absolutely terrifying," he says. "Now it's a lot more comfortable. Sonny is like the Donkey in *Shrek*, irritating but endearing. The challenge has been to create a character the audience can still invest in when things get dark."

PITFALLS? Has the novelty worn through?

PAY-OFF Nan's/Mum's birthday: sorted. **IF**



156 TEENAGE KICKS OUT || 2015 TBC

PLAYERS Miles Szanto, Shari Sebbens, Daniel Webber, Anni Finsterer, Craig Boreham (director)

PLOT Just when he's about to escape the strictures of his Hungarian immigrant family, the death of his brother leaves guilt-racked Miklós Varga (Szanto) in a dilemma. Stay or make a break for freedom?

PITCH Fleshed out from, and partially crowd-funded on the strength of his short *Drowning*, *Teenage Kicks* is a modern Australian yarn. "The story is quite intergenerational," says debut feature writer/director Craig Boreham. "There's this idea that things that happen in your parents'

youth kind of resonate through the timeline and effect the next generation."

PITFALLS? Micro-budget kitchen sink drama about Australian migrants? Worthy alert!

PAY-OFF Good young actors and a veteran short director making meaningful, gutsy stuff. **JM**



157 PITCH PERFECT 2 OUT || MAY 7

PLAYERS Anna Kendrick, Rebel Wilson, Brittany Snow, Hailee Steinfeld, Katey Sagal, Skylar Astin, Adam DeVine, Elizabeth Banks (also director)

PLOT Having blazed the American a capella championships in *Pitch Perfect*, The Barden Bellas are, for undisclosed reasons, banned from college competition and must win a professional international competition no American team has ever won to be reinstated. Cue sticking it to ze Chermans, in nine-part harmony.

PITCH The feel-good song-fest proved a killer good time, plus a box office and home entertainment winner and this is comedy powerhouse Elizabeth Banks's first full length feature as director. Expect some risqué laughs and flattened sevenths.

PITFALLS? Will the surprising charm of the first be recaptured again or was the mix of smarts and parts lightning in a bottle?

PAY-OFF Whatevs. Anyone with YouTube access and a curious mind will know that a capella is a true phenomenon. Bring it, accabitches! **DM**

to the YA bestseller-to-screen fold in this tale of reform school girl Luce (Timlin) who discovers she's the object of centuries' spanning affection of two fallen angels.

162 FAR FROM MEN DIR David Oelhoffen CAST

Viggo Mortensen, Reda Kateb
Mortensen's multi-lingual actorly talents are on display once more in this western as a teacher in Algeria escorting an Arab farmer (Kateb) to trial for murder. Co-scored by Nick Cave.

163 FATHERS AND DAUGHTERS

DIR Gabriele Muccino **CAST** Russell Crowe, Amanda Seyfried, Aaron Paul
Set in two time scapes, Crowe plays a famous New York novelist wrestling with mental illness in the 1980s; Seyfried his adult daughter wrestling with childhood demons in present day Manhattan.

164 THE FORGER DIR Philip Martin CAST

John Travolta, Christopher Plummer, Tye Sheridan

Former child prodigy cum petty thief Ray Cutler (Travolta) cuts a deal to be released early from the clink to see his sick son (Sheridan), the catch being he must carry out an art heist switcheroo.

165 GOD HELP THE GIRL DIR Stuart Murdoch CAST

Emily Browning, Olly Alexander
Belle & Sebastian frontman Murdoch writes and directs this whimsical pop musical with Browning as the depressive Eve who escapes hospital for a musical odyssey in Glasgow.



200 MOVIES TO WATCH IN 2015



166 BACKTRACK OUT || 2015 TBC

PLAYERS Adrien Brody, Sam Neill, Robin McLeavy, Bruce Spence, Michael Petroni (director)

PLOT Teetering on the brink of a nervous breakdown, psychologist Peter Bowers (Adrien Brody) goes off the rails when he discovers his patients are ghosts. Why they are haunting him? All will be revealed in a trip to his hometown.

PITCH Written and directed by Michael Petroni (the scribe behind *The Rite* and *The Book Thief*) and starring Oscar winner Brody, this locally shot horror promises to mix urban spookiness and Outback chills. "There's a lot of depth, truth and backstory for me to delve into," explains the Wes Anderson regular. "I like the heightened genre elements; they're really fun for me to play with."

PITFALLS? Brody hasn't headlined a hit in years.

PAY-OFF After *The Babadook* whet appetites, *Backtrack* is the next Aussie high-profile horror off the block. **DMB**



167 HOLDING THE MAN

OUT || 2015 TBC

PLAYERS Ryan Corr, Craig Stott, Sarah Snook, Guy Pearce, Anthony LaPaglia, Neil Armfield (director)

PLOT When aspiring actor Timothy Conigrave (Corr) falls for the captain of the school football team John Caleo (Stott), their 15 year long relationship blossoms in the face of prejudice, adversity and the cruel illness that devastated the gay community in the '80s.

PITCH It's been a long time between feature drinks for Neil Armfield. Almost a decade has passed since the Heath Ledger starring *Candy* and his adaptation of Timothy Conigrave's much-loved memoir promises to be equally as emotional, centred by yet another potentially star-making role for Corr.

PITFALLS? Aussie audience apathy towards home-grown product.

PAY-OFF Already a bestseller and a successful play, *Holding The Man* has legions of fans waiting to see the story on the big screen. **DMB**

168 WYRMWOOD: ROAD OF THE DEAD

OUT || FEBRUARY 13, THEN BY DEMAND. READ ON...



PLAYERS Jay Gallagher, Bianca Brady, Leon Burchill, Luke McKenzie, Keith Agius, Berryn Schwerdt, Yure Covich, Kiah Roache-Turner (director, writer)
PLOT Jay Gallagher's mechanic Barry attempts to find his sister Brooke (Bianca Brady) in the days after a meteor shower turns anyone without A-negative blood into a brain-breakfast. Meanwhile a deranged medico (Berry Schwerdt) is experimenting on the undead and survivors alike.

PITCH Let's talk units and numbers: 4 years. 250 litres. A million bucks. Two brothers. These are the base stats for the making of arguably the most fun you'll have in front of a zombie-filled screen in 2015. And here's another number: at the time of writing, 684,000 views of the trailer on the *Empire* Facebook page. It seems the world agrees.

As debutant writer-director Kiah Roache-Turner says, "Being the naïve idiots we were, in 2010, when [Kiah's brother, producer] Tristan and I did the budget, we thought, 'We can do this for \$20,000 in less than a year.' Then four years later, it's a million dollars and it's four years. Which is still disgustingly low

budget for an Australian action film with so many different locations and monsters in basically every scene. We shot this all over the Blue Mountains, a forest in Oberon, all over Sydney in backyards; mostly outdoors locations with constant prosthetics make-up."

There's no two ways about it, it's a feat that is narratively much sharper than the Spierig brothers' debut *Undead*. Over the six months since its completion in August 2014, *Wurmwood: Road Of The Dead* wowed horror film festivals around the globe, is highlighted on critics' froth lists (like this one) and, as mentioned, lit a fire under the internet. It's also a blast: a hero's journey made with love (and little money upfront) by an inspired cast and crew, full of pace, energy, gallows humour and splattering grue, with some nice tweaks on zombie lore: the undead exhale a propellant (probably methane) which can be harnessed for fuel (see our review on page 32). There may be some zombie-human telepathy too. Not bad for a pair of blokes who made horror shorts in their backyard that

made their mum cry in despair, and ads for Aussie Bum cossies. "It's ironic that shooting beautiful footage of men's abdominal muscles lead to me to be able to make a really horrible, gritty, evil looking zombie film," says Roache-Turner with a grin.

And, with the fates of other Australian genre films in mind (awful box office), the release strategy is novel: driven by demand. "On Feb 13, we're going to be screening on 40-70 screens around the country, then we're going to use a company called Fan Force to contact fans all over the world to organise screenings when and where fans want them," say the director. "If we can fill a cinema, we'll do it. We go directly to the fans and ask, 'Who wants it?'"

You know you do.

PITFALLS? The lack of budget could make things a little daffy/creaky.

PAY-OFF Zombies, road warriors, first aid kits with beer. **DM**

2015 UNDATED cont.
169 **HOUSEBOUND**

DIR Gerard Johnstone
CAST Morgana O'Reilly
Quirky Kiwi horror comedy where a young woman (O'Reilly) is on enforced home detention – not ideal when the family digs are haunted. Or are they?



170 **HOW TO MAKE LOVE LIKE AN ENGLISHMAN**

DIR Tom Vaughan **CAST** Pierce Brosnan, Salma Hayek Brosnan is very naughty in this rom-com as a hedonistic professor forced to take stock when he knocks up a student (Jessica Alba) and has her stepsister (Hayek) to answer to.

171 **ICON**

DIR Stephen Frears
CAST Ben Foster, Chris O'Dowd, Dustin Hoffman Frears brings the rise and fall of Lance Armstrong (Foster) to the big screen. O'Dowd plays sports writer David Walsh whose book the film is based on, and who was initially ostracised for calling out Armstrong's lies.

172 **GUN**

DIR Gavin O'Connor
CAST Natalie Portman, Joel Edgerton, Ewan McGregor One of the most troubled productions in recent years with departing directors and a carousel cast, this Western sees Portman as a woman engaging her ex-love (Edgerton) to avenge her outlaw husband's death.

173 **KILL ME THREE TIMES**

DIR Kriv Stenders **CAST** Simon Pegg, Alice Braga, Callan Mulvey It's murder, blackmail, revenge and plenty of mayhem by-the-sea in this comedy thriller with Brit import Pegg going against type as a mercurial assassin.



OZPOCALYPSE!
Tap the play buttons to watch two exclusive behind-the-scenes clips.

174-176

“I HAVE NO
DESIRE TO BE
A SEXY-GIRL
STereotype”

AS A BALLSY PICKPOCKET IN WILL SMITH CAPER *FOCUS*, SUPPORTING MICHELLE WILLIAMS IN *SUITE FRANÇAISE*, OR THE LAST WOMAN ON EARTH IN *Z FOR ZACHARIAH*, MARGOT ROBBIE IS CERTAINLY SET TO BE SO MUCH MORE THAN ARM CANDY

WORDS WILL LAWRENCE PORTRAITS BRIAN BOWEN SMITH



200
MOVIES TO WATCH
IN 2015



200 MOVIES TO WATCH IN 2015



MARGOT ROBBIE MOVES fast. Her propulsion from Ramsay Street to the Hollywood A-list has been so lightning-quick that even the fast-living *Wolf Of Wall Street* would have struggled to keep pace. We meet in a warm SoHo hotel on a chilly New York morning and she immediately launches into an enthusiastic appreciation of her 2014 UK *Empire* Award for Best Newcomer, claimed courtesy of a plucky performance in Martin Scorsese and Leonardo DiCaprio's adaptation of the Jordan Belfort story. The gong resides atop her fridge, standing as her first-ever acting prize of note. She remains grateful, greeting us with an affectionate hug. We're here to discuss her next leading role, once more opposite a big acting name, this time Will Smith in *Focus*, in which she plays a young thief who becomes involved (professionally and romantically) with Smith's veteran con artist. "I had to learn to be a pickpocket for this film," the 24-year-old Aussie tells us. "I trained with Apollo Robbins, who is a pickpocket extraordinaire, and on day one, one of the ADs came into the room and Apollo was like, 'Steal his phone!'"

"I tried and suddenly the AD finds me with my hand in his back pocket; it was like I was grabbing his arse! He avoided me like the plague after that, even after I'd explained. When he walked past me in the

hallways he would put his back to the wall, worried that I was going to grab his arse again. It was awful!"

"You have to be utterly fearless as a pickpocket," she adds, "and it is a very ballsy thing to do. Though my character in *Focus*, Jess, is a very ballsy girl."

THE SAME COULD

be said of Robbie. She barely batted a mascaraed eyelid, for example, when asked to disrobe in *The Wolf Of Wall Street*. "I hope I am fearless," she says, "at least with my acting, because it can be terrifying at times."

It is not so much nudity that causes concern, "though while shooting *Wolf* I was thinking, 'Oh no! My Italian teacher from school is going to see me naked. And my dentist, who I've known since I was a kid!'" Her occasional angst is agitated, rather, by her desire to match her collaborators.

The Queenslander's fledgling career has brought her face-to-face not only with DiCaprio and Smith, but also the likes of Chiwetel Ejiofor (*Z For Zachariah*), Tina Fey (*The Talibán Shuffle*), Alexander Skarsgård (*Tarzan*) and Michelle Williams (*Suite Française*).

Her collection of co-stars is impressive. "Acting can be nerve-wracking when you are up against really capable people," she explains. "You can't half-arse it, otherwise it ends up looking stupid."

She will 'full-arse' it, no doubt,

Dastardly diva Harley Quinn from DC's Suicide Squad. Robbie opposite Will Smith in the upcoming *Focus*. Breaking big alongside screen beau Leonardo DiCaprio in Scorsese's *The Wolf Of Wall Street*.

when she takes on the role of the inscrutable super-baddie Harley Quinn in DC's anti-hero collective *Suicide Squad* (from *Fury* director David Ayer), which will send her into orbit with Smith once again, alongside Jared Leto as her partner in clownish crime, The Joker. At the time we meet she is still awaiting confirmation of her casting and is reluctant to discuss the role. "I have learned a bit about her," is all she'll say, "and she seems interesting."

Ms. Quinn is a long-time fan favourite, a sly super-villain whose pulp history incorporates an abusive relationship with The Joker. Quite how her story unfolds in Ayer's film remains to be seen, but it seems safe to assume she will be as spiky as a jester's bonnet. Robbie is determined to develop beyond her sex symbol status. "After *Wolf*, I suppose I could have been cast as a sexy-girl stereotype," she concedes, "but I have no desire to be a sex symbol. I'm very keen to shift my career down a different path."

TAKE HER ROLE

as Jane in David Yates's upcoming adaptation of *Tarzan*. When *Empire* wondered aloud to producer David Barron if she was that film's damsel in distress, he blurted, "Oh good Lord, no. One doesn't hire *Margot Robbie* to play a damsel in distress..."

"That's so funny," she says, "because that was the first thing I said. I have no interest in being that."



2015 UNDATED cont.

177 KING OF THE KASTLE

DIR Brian Gatewood **CAST** Asa Butterfield, Clive Owen

Indie comedy in which a philanderer (Owen) is caught with his pants down and blackmailed by a teenager (Butterfield). Jacki Weaver (*Silver Linings Playbook*) is also cast in an unknown role.



178 KUMIKO: THE TREASURE HUNTER

DIR David Zellner **CAST** Rinko Kikuchi, David Zellner, David and Nathan Zellner's brilliant take on the true story of a Japanese woman (Kikuchi) who travelled from Tokyo to the snowy US Midwest to find the moneyed briefcase Steve Buscemi buried in *Fargo*.

179 THE LAST HAMMER BLOW

DIR Alix Delaporte **CAST** Romain Paul, Gregory Gadebois. Victor (Paul) is a teenager who doesn't know his father (Gadebois) or much about music, but it's music that will help to bridge the distance between them.

180 THE LEGEND OF BARNEY THOMSON

DIR Robert Carlyle **CAST** Robert Carlyle, Emma Thompson, Ray Winstone. Carlyle makes his feature directorial debut in this black comedy pulling double duty as the eponymous awkward Glaswegian barber who falls into the milieu of serial killing. *Barney Scissorhands*?



When I read the *Tarzan* script it felt like *Indiana Jones* meets *Pirates Of The Caribbean*, a mix of big adventure, fun and humour." When the now-fully-civilised John Clayton III, Lord Greystoke (Skarsgård), is asked to return to the Congo, Jane decides that she will travel with him, despite the inherent danger. "John has no say in the matter," she insists. "This Jane is feisty, capable, very outspoken and not a damsel."

The actress' own, Jane-like tenacity has carried her a long way. She grew up in Queensland, working on her grandparents' farm before she scooted off to Melbourne at the age of 17 to launch her career via TV shows *The Elephant Princess* and *Neighbours*. She then relocated to LA, snaffling a role in the air-stewardess TV drama *Pan Am*, before securing her breakthrough when Scorsese cast her in *Wolf*.

A string of impressive-looking indies now follows, and her familiarity with farm work proved handy when shooting *Z For Zachariah*, in which she stars as a nuclear holocaust survivor who's thrown together with two dubious fellows played by Ejiofor and Chris Pine. She plays young at 19 and describes the film as "a psychological thriller". She was cast just five days before filming began and the producers were nervous. "They were like, 'Shit, there's so much to teach you. We need to show you how to use a rifle.' I was like, 'I can do that. Drive a tractor? I can do that. Milk the cow? I can do that, too.'"

This March she'll provide support in the Michelle Williams-led World War I drama *Suite Française* before starting work on *The Taliban Shuffle* with her *Focus* directors Glenn Ficarra and John Requa. She describes it as "a very dark comedy. We are news reporters in the war in Afghanistan so it's a dark context. It is intense and it has massive tonal shifts. It is sad in parts, too, and moving and a bit of a romance. I'm looking forward to working with Glenn and John again. I had a great time with them on *Focus*."

Of course she did. That is where she learned to pick pockets. As our interview draws to a close, *Empire* wonders if she plans to keep working on that particular skill. "No," she replies. "My arse-grabbing days are definitely over."

FOCUS IS OUT ON MARCH 5. BOTH SUITE FRANÇAISE AND Z FOR ZACHARIAH ARE SET FOR RELEASE THIS YEAR.

181

STAR WARS: THE FORCE AWAKENS

OUT || DECEMBER 17

2015 UNDATED cont.

182 LIFE

DIR Anton Corbijn **CAST**

Robert Pattinson, Dane DeHaan
The story of the friendship that produced indelible images of a pop culture icon, Pattinson is the uptight snapper Dennis Stock commissioned to photograph freewheeling James Dean (DeHaan) by *Life* magazine in 1955 on a life (ahem) changing US road trip.

183 LILTING

DIR Hong Khaou **CAST** Ben

Whishaw, Pei-pei Cheng, Andrew Leung
In London, Richard (Whishaw) and the elderly Junn (Cheng) attempt a rapprochement after the death of Kai (Leung), Richard's boyfriend and Junn's son.

184 LONDON HAS FALLEN

DIR Babak Najafi **CAST** Gerard Butler,

Aaron Eckhart, Morgan Freeman
With fallen Olympus now resurrected, it's off to the Old Dart to bust up another capitol where the British Prime Minister's funeral goes off with a bang.

185 THE LOST AVIATOR

DIR Andrew Lancaster **CAST**

Andrew Lancaster, Ewen Leslie
In this doco, Lancaster unveils the colourful, epic life of his uncle Bill Lancaster, aviation pioneer and suspect in the murderous end of a love triangle.

186 MACBETH

DIR Justin Kurzel **CAST**

Michael Fassbender, Marion Cotillard
From Snowtown to 11th century Scotland, Kurzel helms this latest rendition of one of the Bard's staples. Fassbender looks to mean business in war paint as Macca.

187 MADAME BOVARY

DIR Sophie Barthes **CAST** Mia

Wasikowska, Ezra Miller, Paul Giamatti
The latest adaptation of Flaubert's classic casts Wasikowska as the unfulfilled Madame who in 19th Century France, bored of the provincial married life indulges in affairs and extravagance.

188 MY SUMMER IN PROVENCE

DIR Rose Bosch **CAST** Jean Reno,

Hugo Dessoux, Chloé Jouannet
Generations clash as three Parisian



My Summer Province.

siblings are sent to regional southern France to stay with their unknown grandparents after their parents separate. Reno is their cranky Pop.

189 MR HOLMES

DIR Bill Condon **CAST**

Ian McKellen, Laura Linney
A new take on Arthur Conan Doyle's sleuth reteams McKellen with *Gods And Monsters* director Condon. This is old Sherlock, haunted by a 50-year-old case.

190 NINA

DIR Cynthia Mort **CAST** Zoe

Saldana, David Oyelowo, Mike Epps
Saldana is transformed as the high priestess of blues and soul in this biopic on the turbulent life of Nina Simone and her love affair with her manager and nurse (Oyelowo).

191 NOW ADD HONEY

DIR Wayne Hope **CAST**

Portia de Rossi, Robyn Butler, Lucy Fry
Crack open the perma-tan and glitter as Hollywood starlet Honey (Fry) brings some razzle-dazzle chaos to her Aussie family The Morgans and perhaps a tonic for their discontent. From married



FEEL IT AGAIN!
Tap to watch the
trailer for *Star Wars: The Force Awakens*
one more time!



PLAYERS John Boyega, Daisy Ridley, Adam Driver, Oscar Isaac, Andy Serkis, Domhnall Gleeson, Max von Sydow, Lupita Nyong'o, Gwendoline Christie, Harrison Ford, Carrie Fisher, Mark Hamill, Anthony Daniels, Peter Mayhew, Kenny Baker, Warwick Davis, J.J. Abrams (co-writer/director)

PLOT Why is Boyega's Finn in a stormtrooper uniform? What is Sith Kylo Ren doing in the forest? Why is a FIFA mascot on Tatooine? The only confirmed fact is that it's set 30 years after *Episode VI*.

PITCH The trailer suggests this is the perfect blend of old-school *Star Wars* (weathered

planets, concept designs by Ralph McQuarrie, probe droid sound effects) with new twists (broadsabers, the Falcon duelling in recognisable atmospheres). And we still haven't seen

Driver, Gleeson, von Sydow, Nyong'o, Christie and the old gang. Or have we?

PITFALLS?

Expectation is already at fever pitch. Can *The Force Awakens* be all things to all people?

PAY-OFF Have you felt it? **WT**

CREDITS

PREVIEW COMPILE

Jim Mitchell

EXTRA DESIGN

Blair Pagan

PREVIEW WRITERS

DMB David Michael Brown

NDS Nick de Semlyen

IF Ian Freer

CH Chris Hewitt

JM Jim Mitchell

DM Daniel Murphy

IN Ian Nathan

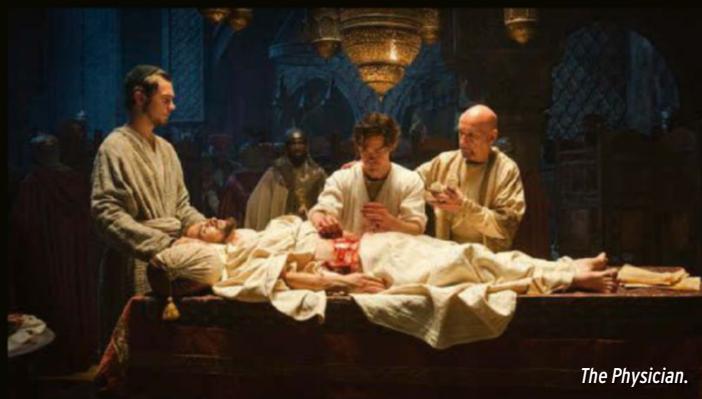
NP Nev Pierce

OR Olly Richards

AS Anna Smith

WT Will Thomas

JW James White



writer-director team Butler and Hope (TV's *Upper Middle Bogan*).

192 ODDBALL

DIR Stuart McDonald **CAST** Shane Jacobson, Sarah Snook, Alan Tudyk
The true story of chook farmer Allen 'Swampy' Marsh (Jacobson) who came up with the novel idea to use his maremma sheepdog Oddball to protect a colony of tiny Penguins from predators.

193 PARTISAN

DIR Ariel Kleiman **CAST** Vincent Cassel, Jeremy Chabriel,

The Physician

Florence Mezzara
An Australian psychological thriller featuring French imports, this debut from Kleiman stars Cassel as Gregori, a dangerous commune leader whose serene following is tested when his teachings are questioned by a teenage boy (Chabriel).

194 THE PHYSICIAN

DIR Philipp Stolzl **CAST** Ben Kingsley, Tom Payne, Stellan Skarsgård
Period epic adventure about a young man (Payne) who, touched by death in 11th century England, travels to Persia to train to be a physician under Kingsley.

195 PRIDE AND PREJUDICE AND ZOMBIES

DIR Burr Steers **CAST** Lily James, Sam Riley, Douglas Booth
The bonnet drama meets the marauding dead, manners meets brain splatter in this definition of mash-up. Based on Seth Grahame-Smith's Austen parody.

196 QUEEN OF THE DESERT

DIR Werner Herzog **CAST** Nicole Kidman, Robert Pattinson, James Franco
Nickers plays Gertrude Bell, explorer, writer, archaeologist, spy and British attaché who played a major part in the formation of the Middle East at the turn of the 20th century.

197 RUBEN GUTHRIE

DIR Brendan Cowell **CAST** Patrick Brammall, Robyn Nevin, Jack Thompson
Multi-hyphenate Cowell makes his feature debut adapting his stage play, a black comedy-drama about a hard living advertising creative (Brammall) hitting rock bottom that dares to explore the fallout of binge drinking.

198 RUTH & ALEX

DIR Richard Loncraine **CAST** Diane Keaton, Morgan Freeman
Coming of treble age real estate reminiscing as senior couple Ruth (Keaton) and Alex (Freeman) put their East Village apartment of 40 years up for sale and look back on the memories they made there.

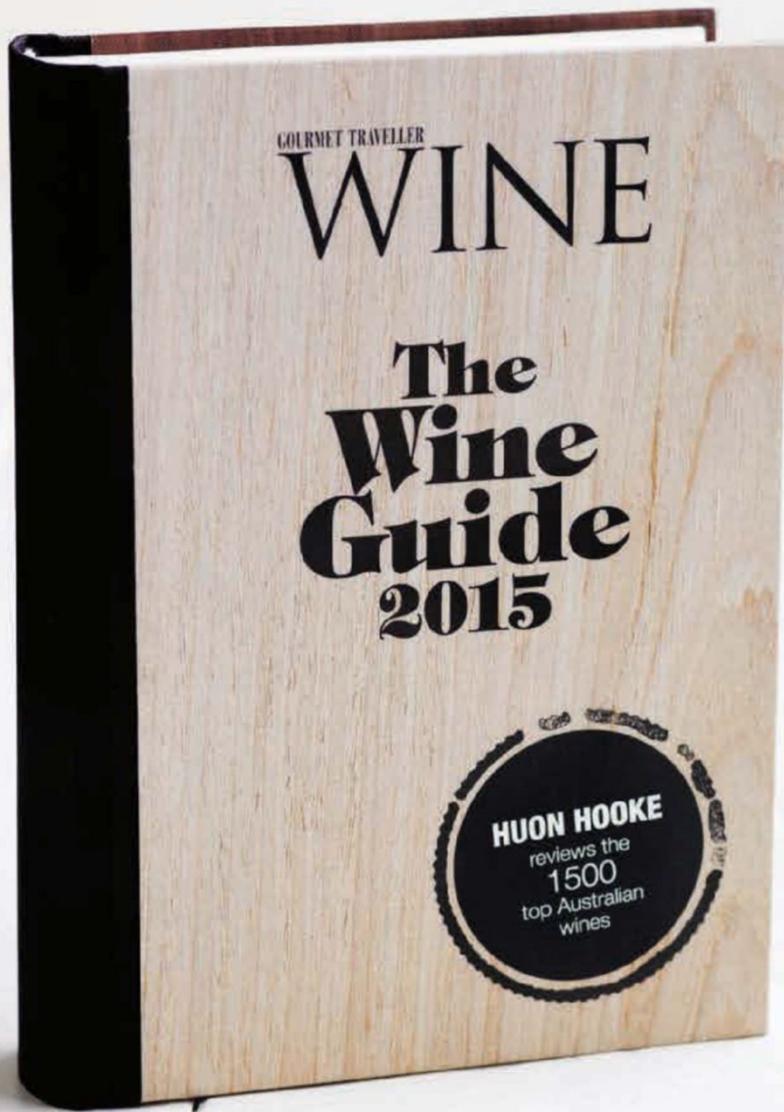
199 SLOW WEST

DIR John Maclean **CAST** Michael Fassbender, Kodi Smit-McPhee, Ben Mendelsohn
In this late 19th century set Western, a young man (Smit-McPhee) arrives in Colorado from Scotland on the trail of love but the dangerous frontier causes him to join forces with a mysterious drifter (Fassbender) who protects him for cash.

200 STRANGERLAND

DIR Kim Farrant **CAST** Nicole Kidman, Joseph Fiennes, Hugo Weaving
Said to be a return to Kidman's *Dead Calm* thriller roots, this Irish-Australian co-production has Kidman and Fiennes as parents enduring the mystery of their teen going missing in the desert.

GORUMET TRAVELLER WINE WINE GUIDE 2015



HUON HOOKE REVIEWS THE TOP AUSTRALIAN & INTERNATIONAL WINES

SECURE A COPY of this beautifully presented, 645-page hardcover guide by *Gourmet Traveller WINE*'s contributing editor Huon Hooke for yourself or a friend.

In the front of the book you'll find ratings and tasting notes for more than 1,500 recently released wines. Turn the book over and you have a second cover and a second book containing ratings for 10,000 wines from around the world.

The Wine Guide 2015 is a completely different format to any other wine guide containing vintage charts, 360 analytics telling where a certain wine stands among similar wines, and price benchmarks so that you can compare the value of the wine against others of the same rating.

The book costs \$44.95 (including GST and postage) within Australia.
TO ORDER Call Magshop on 13 61 16 and quote M1412WIG or visit www.magshop.com.au/gourmet-traveller-wineguide



ORDER WITH YOUR PHONE
Download the free viewa app and scan
the page with your phone or tablet.

ORDER
YOUR
COPY



ROSS HILL

2012 ROSS HILL RIESLING
RIESLING

2012 ROSS HILL CHARDONNAY
CHARDONNAY

2012 ROSS HILL PINOT NOIR
PINOT NOIR

2012 ROSS HILL PINOT NOIR
PINOT NOIR

PATRICK OF COONAWARRA

2012 PATRICK OF COONAWARRA
SHIRAZ

PENFOLDS

2012 PENFOLDS RIESLING
RIESLING

2012 PENFOLDS SHIRAZ
SHIRAZ

2012 PENFOLDS SHIRAZ
SHIRAZ

2012 PENFOLDS SHIRAZ
SHIRAZ

PLAY

= DVD, BLU-RAY, TV ETC. =

p100

WHIP IT GOOD

Miles Teller and J.K. Simmons beat the drum and butt heads in the Oscar-nominated *Whiplash*

Also:

102 GALLIPOLI

Empire visits the set of the epic new miniseries

104 GREAT SCOTT!

We catch-up with Christopher 'Doc Brown' Lloyd

WIN!
A RISE PRIZE PACK,
WERWOLF HORROR
WOLVES, JESSE
EISENBERG'S NIGHT
MOVES AND BLU-RAY
COPIES OF GONE GIRL
AND GAME OF THRONES
SEASON 4!

p112



104



105



107



108



110

REWIND: Indiana Jones-lite in *King Solomon's Mines* and Arnie pumps iron in... *Pumping Iron*.

MASTERMIND: Richard Linklater 'links' together his impressive filmography. Sorry.

MASTERPIECE: John Wayne – gasp – does some serious acting as *Red River*'s bad guy.

GAMES: The ultimate preview of all of the huge titles set to hit the gaming world in 2015.

HARDWARE: 2015 tech: hoverboards! Self-lacing shoes! Flying cars! *Jaws* 19 in 3D! Etc.

PLAY

"He just asked me if I wanted to make a sequel!"



WONDER YEARS
Tap and go behind-the-scenes of a boy's life.

BOYHOOD

2014 B-R DD UV

Family Ties

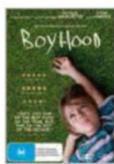
Out February 26 / Rated M / Director Richard Linklater / Cast Ellar Coltrane, Ethan Hawke, Patricia Arquette, Lorelei Linklater

B-R DENOTES ALSO AVAILABLE ON BLU-RAY

3D DENOTES ALSO AVAILABLE ON 3D BLU-RAY

DD DENOTES ALSO AVAILABLE FOR DIGITAL DOWNLOAD

UV DENOTES ALSO AVAILABLE FOR ULTRAVIOLET



WHAT MAKES BOYHOOD EXTRAORDINARY is how ordinary it is. In plot terms, almost nothing happens. A boy grows up, and his family changes around him, falling apart and coming together in a slow orbit of love, anger and mutual responsibility. What drama there is happens offscreen: cracks in a relationship will be hinted at, only for the whole affair to be old news when we rejoin the story a moment, or a year, later.

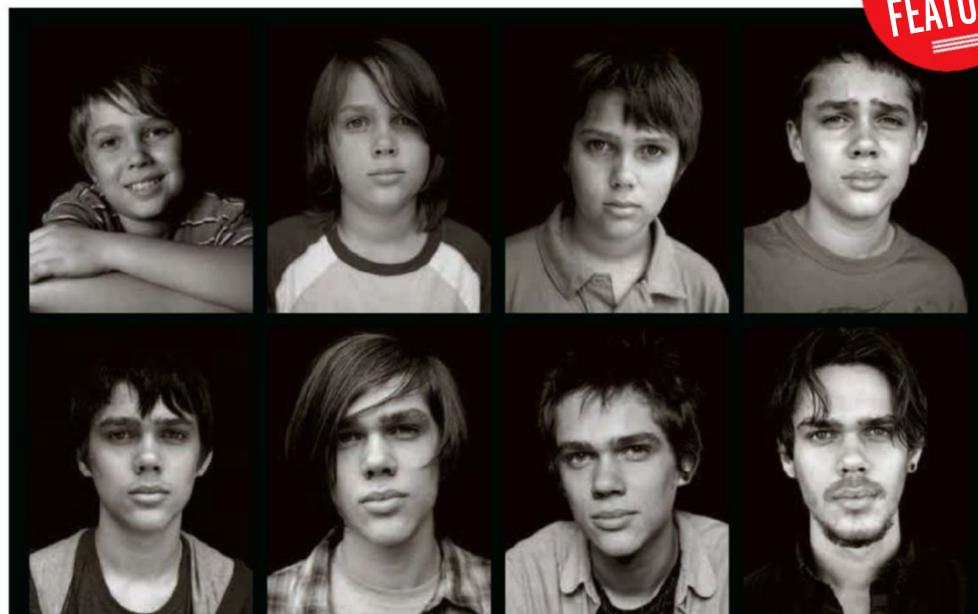
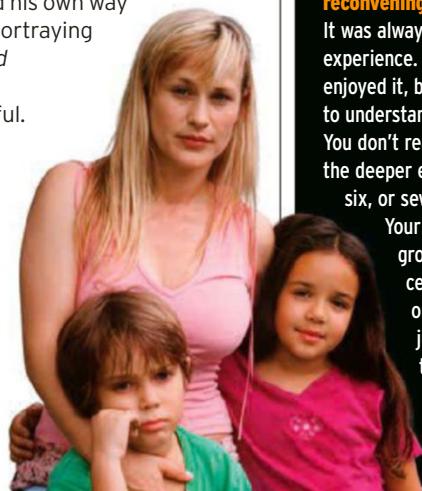
The film's force lies in time passing, a process that movies have faked before but rarely captured like this. By dint of shooting, on clear summer days, each year for 12 years, director Richard Linklater shows change as both a sudden and a gradual process, with Ellar Coltrane's Mason constantly shifting appearance, haircut and interests as he grows into manhood. His older sister is sometimes enemy and sometimes ally, his parents often a source of pain as they try to figure out their own paths and keep the kids on track. A few rites of passage loom large – the first girlfriend, the first heartbreak – but the story skips others entirely in favour of minor family gatherings or ordinary days with friends.

Linklater isn't often credited as an experimental filmmaker – perhaps he is simply too Texan to invite the term – but between the 20-year odyssey of the *Before* trilogy, the rotoscoped weirdness of *A Scanner Darkly* or *Waking Life* and this slow-burning drama, it's clear that he is far readier to push the envelope than many acknowledged auteurs. Still, this has little of *Before Sunrise*'s eloquence or philosophising, being less concerned with abstract ideas and more with day-to-day life, even while dealing with some of the same themes of regret, change and hope.

While video games, Harry Potter books and songs help to pinpoint the progress of time, they are merely markers along the way; this is not a pop-culture trip. The very lack of the story leaves us free to concentrate on the universality of Mason's experience as he negotiates family life and begins to find his own way in the world. And in portraying that growth, *Boyhood* captures something profound and beautiful.

EXTRAS Almost unforgivably, the single extra is a featurette that's under three minutes long. If any film called for a director's commentary or a making-of, surely it was this one.

HELEN O'HARA
FILM ★★★★★
EXTRAS ★★★★★



GROWING PAINS

Ellar Coltrane talks handing over his life to Richard Linklater

When you were six and first offered the role, did you want to become an actor?

I was kind of pursuing it at the time. I had stumbled into a place at an agency in Texas but I was kind of a bashful kid.

And you also had no idea how you would feel at 18...

Totally. I could've turned out all kinds of ways. There's no way to understand what you are getting yourself into at all. So, luckily, I didn't freak out when I realised what I was doing.

How was the filming experience, reconvening every year?

It was always a very positive experience. I definitely always enjoyed it, but it was a slow burn to understanding what I was doing. You don't really question things to the deeper extent when you are six, or seven, eight, nine or 10.

Your position in the world grows as you get older. It certainly began to dawn on me after puberty, just how crazy it was that I've been making this crazy movie my entire life and it is going to come out!

As a director, what was Richard like to work with, considering how inexperienced you were as an actor?

He's just mean. He's a slave-driver. [Laughs] He's the sweetest man I've ever worked with. I've never even seen him get angry. If you disappoint him, he's just disappointed. That's the thing. He's just kind of like, 'Oh, well, that's kind of not what I wanted...' He's just really great. I've spent really small amounts of time on other sets and definitely seen the other world and realised how spoiled I've been to work on *Boyhood*.

You juggled filming with school?

Well, I was home-schooled, so that was part of why I was cast. Scheduling was never really an issue for me. I was always kind of hanging around Austin, doing whatever and would show up when they needed me to.

Did you watch the film as it was being made?

No. I wasn't allowed to. Rick wouldn't let me. Looking back, it was definitely the right choice. It's a lot to take in now as almost an adult, I guess. I can't even imagine what it would've done to my head

to watch it halfway through.

I guess, technically, you're filming an alternate life, which is running exactly parallel to the life you are living...

Absolutely! I mean, it's just due to the nature of the filming process, the object of it actually being a film. These scenes we are playing for all these years, actually being on a screen somewhere, it was removed from my awareness of the project. It allowed me to escape a lot of the self-consciousness so I'm sure seeing what we had filmed would've changed my approach to the film.

And what was the experience like when you first saw the film?

Oh, it was brutal. It was a lot to take in. Rick sent me a copy and told me to watch it alone the first couple times, which was definitely the right thing to do. It was very emotional and it really took me a few times to entirely wrap my head around the film. It was a lot of me to take in all at once. It's a part of yourself that few people really see. It's not exactly seeing myself growing up, but it's closer than anything else I've ever seen.

DAVID MICHAEL BROWN

Richard Linklater on awards, epics and the afterlife of *Boyhood*



PLAY

It was the first time either of them had heard The Delfonics.

BEFORE I GO TO SLEEP 2014

The Identity Grief

Out February 12 / Rated MA15+ / Director Rowan Joffe / Cast Nicole Kidman, Colin Firth, Mark Strong



AMNESIA IS HOLLYWOOD'S FAVOURITE mental disorder, aiding and abetting all manner of plot twists by putting a film's lead in the same clueless shoes as its audience. It strikes again in Rowan Joffe's muted thriller, based on the bestseller by S.J. Watson, but at least he tries to go for an approach to the impairment that's more creepy than dramatic.

Nicole Kidman is the memory-hampered Christine, beginning every day with no recall of anything in the dozen or so years since she was involved in an accident. Her husband, Ben (Colin Firth), wearily sets up his befuddled wife before he heads off to work – and every day Dr. Nash (Mark Strong) calls to tell her they have been

meeting behind her husband's back and invite Christine to another session.

Unsurprisingly, Kidman's wan, fragile Christine is wide-eyed and wary, unsure whether she can trust herself, let alone either man, and as she starts a video diary to provide some measure of continuity to her life, it appears that something might really be amiss. But Joffe's careful adaptation of Watson's plot means that it remains unclear what that might be, and whether Christine herself is merely unravelling. He's helped immeasurably by his cast, all in solemn, twitchy form as Christine's suspicions ebb and flow.

The basic premise could have been schlocky movie-of-the-week stuff, but by casting far bigger and better stars than such an approach

would require and shooting in a quiet, grey suburb, Joffe creates something a little more arthouse than a straight thriller – perversely increasing the tension by making the viewer wonder if this will entirely sidestep genre tropes and taper out quietly. But the story does build to something, and seems oddly weaker for it given the more elegant pauses that precede it. Perhaps it's a limitation of the material, or overfamiliarity with the themes of the amnesia thriller, but you're left wishing that the filmmakers hadn't forgotten all that has gone before when approaching this.

EXTRAS Interviews with Kidman and Joffe plus a Q&A with the director. (Unpreviewed)

HELEN O'HARA

FILM ★★★★



DD

THE WHITE HAIR WITCH OF LUNAR KINGDOM 2014

Out Now / Rated M / Director Zhang Zhiliang / Cast Bingbing Fan, Xiaoming Huang, Wenzhuo Zhao

MYSTICISM RETURNS TO SEVENTEENTH century Ming China with the latest adaptation of Liang Yusheng's 1957 novel, most successfully adapted by Ronny Yu as *The Bride With White Hair* in 1993. The costumes and production design are impressive but this artful martial arts epic is let down by the cliché ridden forbidden love story between Fu teacher Xiaoming Huang and X-Men: DOFP's Bingbing Fan's glow-in-the-dark witch.

EXTRAS None.

CAMERON WOOD

FILM ★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★★



B-R DD UV

TUSK 2014

Out Feb 12 / Rated MA15+ / Director Kevin Smith / Cast Justin Long, Michael Parks

IN AN ERA OF BLAND SEQUELS, reboots, spin-offs and remakes, you've got to give a mainstreamish filmmaker points simply for independently pursuing a passion project about an uber-demented chap turning an utter douche-canoe into a... walrus. But that's Kevin Smith's *Tusk* and, against the odds, some of it really works as genuine body horror that has Long's repellent podcaster trapped and surgically altered by Park's reclusive nutjob. Sadly, the comedy doesn't work nearly as well and a misconceived cameo distracts.

EXTRAS Doco, more. (Unpreviewed)

MICHAEL ADAMS

FILM ★★★★



B-R

HOUSEBOUND 2014

Out Feb 11 / Rated MA15+ / Director Gerard Johnstone / Cast Morgana O'Reilly

ON THE STRENGTH OF THIS AND WHAT *We Do In The Shadows*, NZ can claim to be the world's leading exporter of excellent horror comedy. The remarkable debut from writer-director Johnstone has the superb O'Reilly as junkie Kylie, who's pissed off at being put under home detention in her quirky mum's possibly haunted house. Giving more away would suck. Suffice to say it's hugely funny, suspenseful and scary, like a bastard kid of the Coens and Hitchcock... raised by Argento. Don't miss it.

EXTRAS Deleted scenes, more.

MA

FILM ★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★★



B-R DD UV

THE GIVER 2014

Out Now / Rated M / Director Phillip Noyce / Cast Brenton Thwaites, Jeff Bridges, Meryl Streep

NEARLY 20 YEARS IN DEVELOPMENT, Lois Lowry's Yong Adult novel classic – a staple on primary school reading lists – arrives neutered by familiarity: another dystopia, another Chosen One. There's life in Jeff Bridges's hippy "mind" mentor. The drama, however – shepherded by Aussie director Phillip Noyce in his first film since 2010's Angelina Jolie-starring *Salt* – is as sterile and glassy-eyed as the world it's trying to escape.

EXTRAS Script read-through with original star Lloyd Bridges, making-of, deleted scenes.

SIMON CROOK

FILM ★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★★

B-R DENOTES ALSO AVAILABLE ON BLU-RAY

3D DENOTES ALSO AVAILABLE ON 3D BLU-RAY

DD DENOTES ALSO AVAILABLE FOR DIGITAL DOWNLOAD

UV DENOTES ALSO AVAILABLE FOR ULTRAVIOLET



WOOF
Tap to see the trailer
in all its hairy glory!

Momoa's Thundercats
cosplay took first prize.



WOLVES 2014 B-R DD

The wolfpack return

Out Now / Rated M / Director David Hayter / Cast Jason Momoa, Lucas Till, Merritt Patterson



STROLLING ACROSS THE STATES LIKE A toothy *Littlest Hobo*, Cayden Richards (Lucas Till) is down on his luck. After crushing the skull of a bully football player and getting a little too hairy in a back-seat tryst with his girlfriend, the nightmare-ridden teen awakens to find his family home decorated with his parents' innards. He hits the road, *The Incredible Hulk* style, on the run from the authorities and determined to protect the (still living) people he loves. He soon finds himself in Lupine Ridge, a town that is hairy on the inside.

Borrowing ideas aplenty from Joe Dante's *The Howling*, John Landis's *An American Werewolf In London* and last year's Canadian spoof *WolfCop*, it's no surprise when Cayden, and the viewer, discover that his past is inexplicably entwined with the townsfolk. The townsfolk who live in Lupine Ridge... Who knew?

Unfortunately Till, fresh from playing Havok in *X-Men: Days Of Future Past*, makes for a bland hero in human form. Of the rest of the cast it's only *Games Of Thrones*'s Jason Momoa who shines, even beneath the latex, as the leader of the pack. His wise-cracking bad guy crackles the film into life.

The shapeshifters themselves are delightfully old school. Yes, the transformations are aided by digital trickery but the final wolves stand proud in all their latex glory. Created by Oscar winner Dave Elsey

(for his work with the legendary Rick Baker on *The Wolfman*) and his wife Lou, the wolf pack are a testament to the pair's skill. Even when the titular beasts start chatting during the climactic battles or make the beast (cough) with two backs – now *de rigueur* in all werewolf flicks; this also thankfully lacks *WolfCop*'s queasy pensioner bestiality angle – they lend *Wolves* an edge of artistry it would have sorely lacked if the makers had taken the high-tech CGI route.

Metal Gear Solid actor-turned-director David Hayter desperately wants *Wolves* to be cool, mixing '80s style horror with *Hemlock Grove* style modern chills, with a twist of *Twilight* romance thrown in for good measure, but the inherent daftness of the plot constantly hinders. There are some impressive action set pieces and the gore flows copiously, but the soapie shenanigans dilute any horror generated.

Kudos, however, to all involved for trying to bring the werewolf genre howling into the present day, albeit with retro chic. It's just a shame, as so often is the case in the horror field, that a lacking script and a preponderance of clichés trips things up.

Wolves is still rip-roaring fun, the humans just need to be more than chewy werewolf fodder.

EXTRAS Behind-the-scenes. (Unpreviewed)

DAVID MICHAEL BROWN

FILM ★★★★

“Tries to bring the werewolf genre howling into the present day.”

FX-gurus Dave and Lou Elsey talk latex, gore and fur



WHAT IF 2014 B-R DD

Out February 11 / Rated M / Director Michael Dowse / Cast Daniel Radcliffe, Zoe Kazan, Adam Driver, Rafe Spall



HAVING DONE WITH ALL

that H.P. sorcery, Daniel Radcliffe appeared to be dipping himself into as many different genres

as he can, but *What If?* indicates that he could, if he wanted, also dominate territory once drenched in the heady musk of Hugh Grant.

The pale, polite and self-effacing Wallace is close enough to Radcliffe himself to disperse accusations that the actor's deliberately impinging on Grant's old turf and he proves as appealing a presence as Grant did during any of his Richard Curtis gigs. Still, you can't escape the fact that, paired as he is with the appealingly elfin Zoe Kazan, whose character, Chantry, works at an animation studio and is luminously perky and quirky despite past traumas, *What If?* places us firmly in the rom-comfort zone. A polite, bumbling, sweary Brit plus a dreamy, pixie-ish girl? All the film needs is a sprint to an airport and a ker-azy pal to constantly remind the male lead how socially constrained he is and that's a bingo! Guess what? Both those things do appear. But, in its defence, the former provides a twist on the run-to-airside cliché, and the latter is played by the ever-ace Adam Driver.

EXTRA Making-of, more. (Unpreviewed)

DAN JOLIN

FILM ★★★★

PLAY

WHY DON'T YOU PLAY IN HELL?

2013 **DD****Killer filler**

Out February 18 / Rated R18+ / Director Sion Sono / Cast Jun Kunimura, Fumi Nikaidô, Shin'ichi Tsutsumi



ANYONE WHO HAS WITNESSED THE outlandish output of Sion Sono (*Suicide Club*, *Guilty Of Romance*) will not be surprised by the director's gory love letter to filmmaking. Meta mayhem rages in this cinematic style clash as a grown-up toothpaste ad child star, feuding Yakuza clans and a renegade film collective called The Fuck Bombers – complete with a yellow track-suited

Bruce Lee wannabe – join forces to shoot the ultimate action film. For real. Part saccharine melodrama, crazed Japanese game show and the goriest bloodfest this side of *Kill Bill*, *WDYPIH?* astounds with visual panache and delirious craziness. Be prepared, this is a one of a kind. "Gnash your teeth hard, let's go!"

EXTRAS None.**DAVID MICHAEL BROWN**

FILM ★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★★★

SON OF A GUN

B-R DD

Out Now / Rated MA15+ / Director Julius Avery / Cast Ewan McGregor, Brenton Thwaites, Alicia Vikander

YOUNG OFFENDER JR (BRENTON THWAITES) IS protected in prison by veteran armed robber Brendan (Ewan McGregor). After his release, JR helps his friend escape and joins a crew put together by a crime boss to carry out a risky gold heist. Though full of contemporary crime signifiers like disposable mobile phones and Russian-accented trophy girlfriends, *Son Of A Gun* has the gritty, rough feel of 1970s heist/hit pictures like *The Getaway*. An entry in the recent resurgence of Australian crime cinema, it covers familiar turf well, with McGregor in good form and tight direction from Julius Avery.

EXTRAS Featurettes, more. (Unpreviewed)**KIM NEWMAN**

FILM ★★★★★



THE LUNCHBOX

DD

Out Now / Rated PG / Director Ritesh Batra / Cast Irrfan Khan, Nimrat Kaur, Nawazuddin Siddiqui, Lillete Dubey

FANS OF CHANCE CONNECTIONS BETWEEN LONELY souls will have plenty to dine on with this cute Indian drama from director Ritesh Batra. *Life Of Pi*'s Irrfan Khan stars as Saajan, an accountant on the verge of retirement who strikes up an unlikely pen-pal friendship with Ila (Nimrat Kaur), a housewife whose lunchboxes she prepares for her husband are somehow ending up on Saajan's desk – a mix-up due to an apparently complicated food delivery system. Perhaps obvious to a fault, *The Lunchbox* nonetheless serves up some life truths amid the gentle performances.

EXTRAS Director's commentary. (Unpreviewed)**LUKE GOODSELL**

FILM ★★★★★



THE HUNDRED-FOOT JOURNEY

2014 **B-R DD****Food, fairly glorious food**

Out Now / Rated PG / Director Lasse Hallström / Cast Helen Mirren, Manish Dayal, Charlotte Le Bon



HELEN MIRREN PLAYS A SNOBBY FRENCH restaurateur in this amiable, light-hearted foodie drama based on Richard C. Morais's novel. She's dismayed when an Indian-English family take over the property opposite, but star chef Manish (Dayal) could persuade the rural French to tuck into a good old-fashioned curry. Pleasant culture-clashes ensue, though it's all rather fantastical, right

down to the local beauty (Le Bon) who remains mysteriously single and ageless. One for the older crowd – though possibly not in France, where Mirren, while great fun, is unlikely to pass for a local. The script by Steven 'Locke' Knight offers gentle pleasures and *Best Exotic Marigold Hotel* fans will eat it up.

EXTRAS None.**ANNA SMITH**

FILM ★★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★★★

B-R DENOTES ALSO AVAILABLE ON BLU-RAY**3D** DENOTES ALSO AVAILABLE ON 3D BLU-RAY**DD** DENOTES ALSO AVAILABLE FOR DIGITAL DOWNLOAD**UV** DENOTES ALSO AVAILABLE FOR ULTRAVIOLET



"Did I ever tell you
I wanted to be
a comedian?"

A WALK AMONG THE TOMBSTONES

2014 B-R DD UV

Tomb with a view

Out February 18 / Rated MA15+ / Director Scott Frank / Cast Liam Neeson, Dan Stevens, David Harbour, Brian 'Astro' Bradley



AS ITS TITLE SUGGESTS, THIS PULPY
thriller doesn't exactly trip the light fantastic; no one ever said this was a walk among golden unicorns and rainbows. Adapted from the tenth book in Lawrence Block's crime novel series (17 in total), director and writer Scott Frank has instead crafted a pacy, grimly tense flick featuring Liam Neeson as private eye, Matt Scudder. Formerly with the NYPD, Scudder's life hit the skids when he accidentally shoots a kid. Now plying a scuzzy, morally loose trade as a PI for any old Joe in exchange for "gifts", Scudder's sought after by drug dealer, Kenny Kristo (Stevens) and hired to find the

men who murdered his wife even though he'd paid her ransom. Reluctantly accepting the job, kicking into gumshoe action, Scudder forms a relationship with street kid TJ (Bradley) and together they work the trail to find the killers and save another woman in danger.

Neeson's in fine, engaging form, anchoring *Tombstones* throughout some unpleasant, sadistic stretches, as Scudder delves deeper into the tar-black drug world. There's something honourable about Neeson, even when he's pumping lead into chests and stomachs, and Scudder's relationship with the resourceful TJ is refreshingly honest.

A Neeson action joint has become a tradition

on the movie calendar; a guilty pleasure galvanised by our main man's reliable, salt-of-the-earth presence. *AWATT* may be a dour trip down a dark alley for some viewers, and it's not so easy to swallow its morally dubious twist on drug dealers as victims. But the film's strong sense of style and hard-edged momentum will keep you locked in for a gritty, propulsive couple of hours. Among Neeson's recent crop of action, file this as a *Taken*-esque experience; a little hard to stomach, but a damn sight better than those abominable *Taken* sequels.

EXTRAS Featurettes, more. (Unpreviewed)

JOHN CATANIA

FILM ★★★★



B-R DD

NIGHT MOVES 2014

Out February 18 / Rated MA15+ / Director Kelly Reichardt / Cast Jesse Eisenberg, Dakota Fanning, Peter Sarsgaard

ECO-TERRORIST THRILLER AS SLOW-
burn horror movie, the latest from *Wendy And Lucy* director Kelly Reichardt is an eerily disarming study in the pursuit of the perceived moral high ground – and the catastrophic personal fallout that can follow. Jesse Eisenberg, Dakota Fanning and Peter Saarsgaard play eco-warriors conspiring to bomb a dam, an operation Reichardt handles with restraint. But it's the aftermath that packs the punch, with Eisenberg at his sociopathic finest.

EXTRAS None.

LG

FILM ★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★★



B-R DD UV

THE JUDGE 2014

Out February 11 / Rated M / Director David Dobkin / Cast Robert Downey Jr., Robert Duvall, Vera Farmiga

WITH THE TAGLINE 'DEFEND YOUR
Honour', you could assume this family-meets-legal drama is John Grisham-lite. Despite some earnestness it isn't that, thanks to the explosive, unsentimental relationship at its core. Hot-shot lawyer Hank Palmer (Downey Jr.) returns home, only to reluctantly defend his county magistrate father Joseph (Duvall), accused of murder. Unlikely plot aside, this is more a story of a father and son's uneasy reconnection. The two Bobs are brilliant sparring partners.

EXTRAS Featurettes. (Unpreviewed)

JIM MITCHELL

FILM ★★★★



B-R DD UV

TAMMY 2014

Out February 25 / Rated M / Director Ben Falcone / Cast Melissa McCarthy, Susan Sarandon, Kathy Bates

THIS MERRILY UNFLATTERING VANITY
project for former bridesmaid and soon-to-be-female-Ghostbuster Melissa McCarthy teams the comedian with Susan Sarandon's mad gran for a sketchy road trip to, well, wherever. McCarthy's willingness to look less-than-her-best and truck loads of brash value (especially that jet-ski rodeo) are priceless, but the duo's chemistry is as convincing as (a slumping it) Sarandon's nylon granny wig. Far less than the sum of its parts.

EXTRAS A brief making-of that adds nothing of interest.

SIMON CROOK

FILM ★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★★



DD

THE KEEPER OF LOST CAUSES 2014

Out Now / Rated MA15+ / Director Mikkel Nørgaard / Cast Nikolaj Lie Kaas, Per Scheel Krüger, Troels Lyby, Sonja Richter

MAVERICK DETECTIVE – LIKE THERE'S
any other kind – Carl Mørck (Lie Kaas) is banished to the basement with assistant Assad (Fares Fares) to shuffle cold-case files. Spluttering superiors be damned, the dogged duo are soon sleuthing out the baffling disappearance of a rising political star (Richter), uncovering fiendish goings on. The first *Department Q* bestseller filmed was Denmark's biggest domestic smash last year and hits the bull's eye for Nordic Noir lovers.

EXTRAS None.

ANGIE ERRIGO

FILM ★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★★

Son Of A Gun's Julius Avery on Ewan McGregor and directing big action

PLAY

The drum solo was a headbutt away from ending.

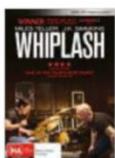


WHIPLASH 2014

B-R DD UV

Drum And Drummer

Out February 26 / Rated MA15+ / Director Damien Chazelle / Cast Miles Teller, J.K. Simmons, Melissa Benoist



TRYING TO MAKE A THRILLER ABOUT jazz is like trying to make a horror about puppies; you are starting with a subject that inspires, in most people, the exact opposite of the emotion you're going for. Yet

Damien Chazelle has done it. He has made a heart-thumping drama about percussion. He has made a sports movie with no sports, but plenty of balls.

In the tradition of great thrillers, it has an ordinary man trying to best a much trickier foe, and like great sports movies it has a rookie intent on winning everything. It just finds those things in a place nobody usually looks. Andrew (Teller) is a talented, but cocky, drummer who wants to join the best band at his music college. The only way to do that is to catch and hold the eye of Fletcher (Simmons), the conductor/coach, who expects those on his team to meet

his high standard or get the hell out. And why shouldn't that be thrilling? Tension is just hoping for the best while expecting the worst. Chazelle yanks your heart into your throat waiting to see if a man will nail a drum roll, because he directs like everything's at stake. In the music room his camera flashes around catching blood, sweat and tears. Andrew drums until his skin cracks open. Nothing is still. Nobody is settled. You'll probably leave the cinema in need of a massage.

Taking nothing away from Teller's all-in performance, this is Simmons's film. He's always been one of the best, but now, finally, a script has caught up with him. Fletcher's a rumbling, black-clad storm of a man, ready to rain hell down on Andrew when he's less than his best. And Simmons really relishes those moments, barking out lines like, "If you deliberately sabotage my band, I will fuck you like a pig." He's terrifying, yet not really a villain. Chazelle keeps the roles shifting.

Whiplash is so close to faultless that its one stumble is frustrating. There's a car crash and a public attack and it is briefly unbelievable, but five minutes of self-indulgence and another 100 of ovation-worthy hits is a great ratio for any performance.

EXTRAS Featurettes, more. (Unpreviewed)

OLLY RICHARDS

FILM ★★★★

"Excuse me while I kiss this guy."

JIMI: ALL IS BY MY SIDE 2014

B-R DD

Guitar hero?

Out February 18 / Rated M / Director John Ridley / Cast André Benjamin, Imogen Poots, Hayley Atwell



GROOVY COSTUMES AND A STRONG performance from André Benjamin (aka Outkast's André 3000) do not a memorable biopic of rock's most electrifying guitarist make. We've waited years for a Jimi Hendrix film, and writer-director John Ridley's labour of love – covering the year 1966-'67, in which Hendrix approached stardom – still doesn't cut it. The Hendrix Estate's refusal to let them use

his music is a huge problem, not solved by soap operatics, clumsy editing and arty/odd sound. A slumping Imogen Poots as self-appointed muse, Hayley Atwell as girlfriend/keeper of the flame, ludicrous cameos (Burn Gorman is like a Python character) and a slew of 'lookalikes' don't help.

EXTRAS None.

ANGIE ERRIGO

FILM ★★☆☆☆ EXTRAS ★☆☆☆☆

Fela: found.



FINDING FELA! 2014

DD

Out February 18 / Rated M / Director Alex Gibney / Cast Fela Kuti, Femi Kuti, Seun Kuti, Bill T. Jones

THE HARDEST-WORKING MAN IN DOCUMENTARIES comes unstuck with this hugely disappointing look at African music legend, people's hero and all-round bad boy, Fela Kuti. While the archive of Kuti is riveting – his stage presence is intoxicating beyond belief – Gibney muddles through the story, setting it half-heartedly against the backdrop of the present-day Broadway musical of Kuti's life. That airbrushes all the meat and sleaze out of the story, making it a hastily assembled mess. Gibney needs to pause and catch his breath. Hopefully, he'll completely reassemble this once he has.

EXTRAS: None.

ED GIBBS

FILM ★★☆☆☆ EXTRAS ★☆☆☆☆

B-R DENOTES ALSO AVAILABLE ON BLU-RAY

3D DENOTES ALSO AVAILABLE ON 3D BLU-RAY

DD DENOTES ALSO AVAILABLE FOR DIGITAL DOWNLOAD

UV DENOTES ALSO AVAILABLE FOR ULTRAVIOLET

THURSDAY JULY 05, 2012

MISSING



AMY DUNNE

If found or seen, please call:
1-855-4-AMY-TIPS

EXIT

THURSDAY JULY 05, 2012

MISSING



He couldn't spot the difference.

GONE GIRL 2014 B-R DD

Fincher's Game

Out Now / Rated MA15+ / Director David Fincher / Cast Ben Affleck, Rosamund Pike, Neil Patrick Harris



DAVID FINCHER LIKES TO PLAY GAMES. And *Gone Girl* is even more of a game, ironically, than *The Game*. There is not only the central mystery to figure out: what exactly has happened to the missing Amy Dunne (Rosamund Pike)? Has her guilelessly smirking husband, Nick (Ben Affleck), murdered her? There is also the sly board-gaming theme that streaks through the film, with appearances by *Mastermind* and *The Game Of Life*, along with a reference to *Scrabble*. Plus there's Amy's own wedding-anniversary treasure hunts, the last of which she prepared just before her disappearance.

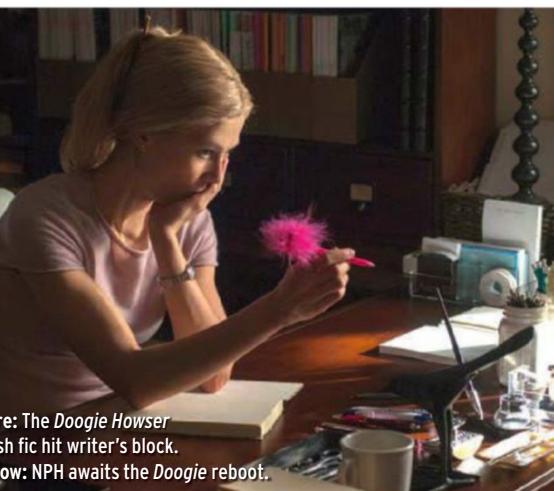
Here is a movie in which Fincher can present a police detective announcing, "We have our first clue," while holding up an envelope on which is scrawled, "Clue One". It's not so much a question of who is the villain or who is the victim; rather, whose game are we actually playing here?

Closely collaborating with Gillian Flynn, the author of the hugely popular novel, Fincher

stays faithful to the original text, but also emphasises the satire and the pastiche, from Trent Reznor's unsettlingly chintzy score to the romcom-riffing Amy diary segments. At one point it even comes close to turning into a parody of a '90s eroti-thriller; you half-expect Sharon Stone to turn up with an ice-pick behind her back. Then, of course, it is also a deftly cynical portrayal of marriage. Which is yet another kind of game...

How funny you find any of this depends on how gallows your humour goes, but together with the director's typically crisp visual invention and his teasing of career-finest work from Affleck and Pike, it ensures repeat-viewing rewards, just as it left plenty to enjoy for those fans of the book who first watched it on its successful theatrical run.

EXTRAS The only extra is a director's commentary. Which would be disappointing if not for the fact that few directors are as adept and entertaining as Fincher is on a talk-track. Highlights include his complaints about wig



Here: The *Doogie Howser* slash fic hit writer's block.

Below: NPH awaits the *Doogie* reboot.

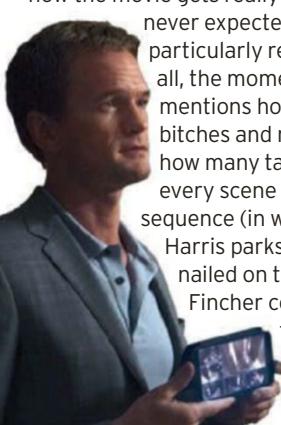
technology ("not really changed since Shakespeare"); the "tricky postmodern hurdle" of making the film with its marketing campaign in mind; his admission at two hours in that "now the movie gets really weird" and "it was

never expected that this would be particularly realistic"; and, best of all, the moment where he mentions how "everybody bitches and moans" about how many takes he demands in every scene and points out a sequence (in which Neil Patrick Harris parks a Jag) that was nailed on take two. "So please," Fincher concludes, "go fuck yourselves."

DAN JOLIN

FILM ★★★★☆

EXTRAS ★★★★☆



"You half expect Sharon Stone to turn up with an ice-pick."

Fincher! Affleck! Pike! That Book! *Empire* goes on the *Gone Girl* set

In the trenches:
accuracy is paramount
in Nine's *Gallipoli*.



PREVIEW

GALLIPOLI 2015

Band Of Diggers

On air February TBC / Rated M / Channel Nine / Director Glendyn Ivin / Cast Kodi Smit-McPhee, Harry Greenwood, Tom Budge, Sam Parsonson, Matt Nable, Nicholas Hope, Travis Jeffrey, Justine Clark, Anthony Hayes, Jeremy Lindsay Taylor, Ashleigh Cummings

AT A SYDNEY CAST AND CREW screening of the first, feature-length episode of Channel Nine's seven-part miniseries *Gallipoli*, veteran producer John Edwards wears a look of relieved astonishment. "This is totally unlike anything that's been done in this country before: an eight hour miniseries with one director, one writer, one composer," he shakes of the head ruefully.

It's a sentiment echoed a few days later by said sole director, Glendyn Ivin, who directs lots of eps of excellent drama *Puberty*

Blues and 2009's very good feature film *Last Ride*. "Someone told me it's the longest shoot for a single director in Australia, ever," he laughs. "It's incredibly exhaustive and there's no way as a director you can truly get your head around eight hours of story, particularly technical battle sequences and stuff, but you hopefully get a very consistent narrative and visual treatment. You come out the other end with a real sense of authorship, which I think any director is looking for."

The Nine Network's *Gallipoli* is

based on Les Carlyon's widely regarded account of the same named book (published in 2001) and is the only production of the several that are marking the 100th anniversary this year that covers the campaign from the dawn landing on April 25th til final withdrawal on December 20th, 1915. The opening double episode covers the entirety of day one, and accuracy has been painstakingly observed, even though Bacchus Marsh and painterly CGI substitutes for the gullies and "bastard country" – as Smit-

McPhee's narrator Thomas "Tolly" Johnson refers to it – of what's now known as Anzac Cove.

Other episodes cover the campaign's major milestones – the armistice to bury the dead, the battles of Lone Pine, The Nek, the role of journos in breaking military censorship (itself the subject of Showcase's *Deadline Gallipoli*) and the evacuation (not to mention the disease and ruthless weather), all told through four central, fictional characters: Tolly, his brother Bevan (Harry Greenwood), and their mates Cliff Sutton (Tom Budge) and Dave Klein (Sam Parsonson). Meanwhile a who's who of Australian film and television turn up as historical figures.

With echoes of the haunted tone of *The Thin Red Line* (Ivin says the 1996 French film *Capitan*

"I haven't done anything as challenging as *The Road* til this." **KODI SMIT-MCPHEE**

B-R DENOTES ALSO AVAILABLE ON BLU-RAY

3D DENOTES ALSO AVAILABLE ON 3D BLU-RAY

DD DENOTES ALSO AVAILABLE FOR DIGITAL DOWNLOAD

UV DENOTES ALSO AVAILABLE FOR ULTRAVIOLET



Conan was also a touchstone) this is neither chest-thumping or heart-wrenching patriotism, resisting several clichés (the British generals aren't *just* blithe and incompetent; the landing isn't *Saving Private Ryan*-strength D-day carnage, instead snipers ping at the boats and much of the fighting is hand-to-hand) and maintaining a handsome blend of action, character drama and history. "[Channel] Nine were truly amazing," says Tom Budge. "My first meeting with them, they said, 'This isn't the nightmare you're afraid it's going to be.' I've done big military before – *The Pacific* was a year of my life. This was such a better experience, kind of the time of my life. We're in the trenches with these characters examining them from an emotional



From left: Harry Greenwood, Kodi Smit-McPhee and Tom Budge.



Alex Tsitsopoulous and Greenwood keep the fire friendly.

perspective. And that's Glendyn's background. He's not some gun-porn guy. It was apparent very quickly that we had like minds about how to get it across."

Greenwood, Parsonson, Budge and our most intriguing export Smit-McPhee all relished the opportunity to play the close-knit crew, although the challenges were both physical and mental. Smit-McPhee tells *Empire* that "as intense as it was, it was what we all signed up for. I hadn't done anything as physically challenging as *The Road* since then and this certainly provided that. But the mental challenge of trying to embody the psychology of a soldier was tougher. That's something nobody can know without experiencing it. So the only way to do it is by feeling for it,

doing as much research as you can to understand the concepts behind how a soldier felt."

Like the underaged trooper he plays, Smit-McPhee turned 18 during shooting (on the same day as the scene celebrating his character's birth), and his wide-eyed dreamer is an apt metaphor for Australia as the immature nation about to bathe in its blood, even if the star of *Let Me In*, *Dawn Of The Planet Of The Apes* and *The Road* has screen experience to burn. It's a perfect combo. Producer John Edwards: "He completely exemplifies the metaphor, but in his eyes, Kodi is an old soul. He carries the things his character goes through, he's remarkable. All of the young blokes are great, but he is truly terrific." **DANIEL MURPHY**

The Missing* star James Nesbitt looks back on *The Hobbit



THE MISSING 2014

Out February 18 / **Rated MA15+** / **Director** Tom Shankland / **Cast** James Nesbitt, Frances O'Connor, Tchéky Karyo

IN 2006 TOM (NESBITT) AND EMILY (O'CONNOR) lost their four year old son on a holiday: in 2014 a haunted and driven Tom teams up with newly-retired French detective Julien Baptiste (Karyo) to investigate new evidence. This isn't quite *Madeleine McCann* The Series, but any similarities with actual events are intentional. It's full of dodgy cops, sleazy media and shattered parents, but while the plot twists are intriguing, it's Nesbitt's performance that lingers. A gripping thriller, but as a look at a tragedy's effects it's devastating.

EXTRAS None.

ANTHONY MORRIS

SHOW ★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★★★



EXTANT: THE FIRST SEASON 2014

Out Now / Rated M / Creator Mickey Fisher / **Cast** Halle Berry, Pierce Gagnon

EXTANT IS BUILT ON TWO SCI-FI HOOKS: what happens when a woman comes back from a solo space mission pregnant? And can a robot become a "real boy"? For a while – thanks to some smart future tech and great performances from Berry as paranoid astronaut Molly and Gagnon as boy robot Ethan – it's a decent mix of mystery and horror. But eventually things get bogged down as clichés pile up and plotlines go nowhere. The ending is a fizz; viewers after answers will have to return for Season 2.

EXTRAS: Deleted scenes; more.

AM

SHOW ★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★★★

PLAY REWIND



The Breakfast Club
go West.

YOUNG GUNS 1988

B-R

Out Now / Rated M / Director Christopher Cain / Cast Emilio Estevez, Kiefer Sutherland, Lou Diamond Phillips

THIS NOISY BRAT PACK WESTERN ENDS UP SUFFOCATED by flip MTV editing and the frathouse atmosphere of a bunch of young actors having a gas hanging out and playing cowboys. In fact, the one thing this film never feels like is a real Western, just a giddy action flick bouncing to an endless succession of shoot-outs and horseback chases mounted with about as much similarity to the traditions of John Ford as the Marx Brothers. Although, set in the 1870s, Cain gives it a crisp, bland '80s sheen, his landscapes are humdrum considering what is on offer, and his care and attention to character non-existent.

EXTRAS The Real Billy the Kid doco, trivia track.

IAN NATHAN

FILM ★★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★★★ TRANSFER ★★★★★

KING SOLOMON'S MINES 1985

Eureka!

Out Now / Rated PG / Director J. Lee Thompson / Cast Richard Chamberlain, Sharon Stone, John Rhys Davies

 **THIS SEMI-FUN FIASCO IS AS TRUE TO** the Cannon films formula as any of the dreck flicks they released in the 1980s, in this case updating H. Rider Haggard's 1880s novel to pre-WWI in order to ape *Raiders Of The Lost Ark* mercilessly for quick bucks. See! The bazaar kidnapping (Sharon Stone in a rug subs Karen Allen's basket). Gasp! At casting John Rhys Davies (albeit, and rather enjoyably, as an odious nasty). Gowp! At the tomb booby-traps! Then, to save dough, the company shot the sequel, *Allan Quatermain And The Lost City Of Gold* back-to-back.

Director J. Lee Thompson was well past his *Guns Of Navarone/Cape Fear* prime here and, thanks to a ludicrous script, dud stunts and iffy race politics, the film falls well short of the Spielberg/Lucas serials homage, despite a handsome location (Zimbabwe) and rollicking score from Jerry Goldsmith. A spry 50-year-old Chamberlain and newbie Stone have a crack, but are baffled for most of it and rightly so. There are camp highlights – the cannibal pot escape – but the journey is nonsense.

EXTRAS Not even a menu, it just starts.

DANIEL MURPHY

FILM ★★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★★★

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?



Heavy.

Manicures:
ticklish.

CHRISTOPHER LLOYD

We catch up with the *Back To The Future* legend...



NOW 76, Christopher Lloyd made a welcome return to the big screen last year, appearing unbilled in *Sin City: A Dame To Kill For* as a scuzzy doctor, and in *A Million Ways To Die In The West* as his iconic *Back To The Future* character, Doctor Emmett Brown. But if you think those surprise cameos were his swansong, think again, future boy. "I love doing what I do and I'm going to keep doing it until I can't get into the make-up chair!" Lloyd tells *Empire*. "I'm doing a lot of independent films [next up are revenge thriller 88 and nautical drama *The Boat Builder*] and I'm busy, which I'm delighted to be."

Despite his reputation for doing few interviews – Lloyd turns out to be an enthusiastic talker. He reveals the

last film that blew him away: "I thought *Birdman* was outstanding. Michael Keaton is just extraordinary." He reminisces his dream role, Uncle Fester in *The Addams Family*: "My folks subscribed to a weekly magazine with a Charles Addams cartoon in it, so I grew up with Fester. It was so strange and joyous, decades later, when I got a call asking me to play that bulbous-headed sight gag." And he even throws in a full-blooded, "GREAT SCOTT!" along the way, allowing *Empire* to tick a box on our bucket list.

He's created Hall Of Fame baddies like Judge Doom in *Who Framed Roger Rabbit* ("A wicked, cartoonish guy. I went for it!") and Klingon Commander Krue in *Star Trek III: The Search For Spock* ("Another bad man who was delicious to

play"). But for most people Lloyd will forever be Doc. And it's fitting that his reunion with a DeLorean on the set of *Million Ways* took place in the Old West, since Lloyd cites the third *Back To The Future* as his favourite. "There was horseback riding, all that shooting on the train, and Doc got to have a romance," he enthuses. "It's every boy's dream to be a cowboy, you know?"

Lloyd is speaking to *Empire* from a new home, his old one having burned down in the 2008 California wildfires. He lost much of his memorabilia in the inferno, but still has at least one precious item in his closet. "I've got Doc's very colourful shirt from *Back To The Future III*, which I treasure," he says. "But my other half says she'd rather not see me wearing it in public... and I accept that." **NICK DE SEMLYEN**

B-R DENOTES ALSO AVAILABLE ON BLU-RAY

3D DENOTES ALSO AVAILABLE ON 3D BLU-RAY

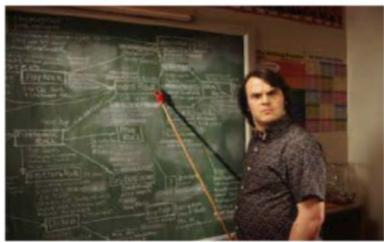
DD DENOTES ALSO AVAILABLE FOR DIGITAL DOWNLOAD

UV DENOTES ALSO AVAILABLE FOR ULTRAVIOLET



RICHARD LINKLATER

School Of Rock-Hard Trivia



1 On Dewey's board in *School Of Rock*, name three of the five bands listed under "Prog Rock".

Wow... I'm going back. Prog rock... Is it King Crimson? Genesis? And... Um... Fuck! It wouldn't be Eno. Did we put Roxy Music? No, they're more like glam... Oh yeah, Pink Floyd! That was so fun.

Correct (the five bands are Yes, Pink Floyd, Genesis, Residents, King Crimson).

2 What's the name of the taxi firm your character uses at the beginning of *Slacker*?

Roy's!

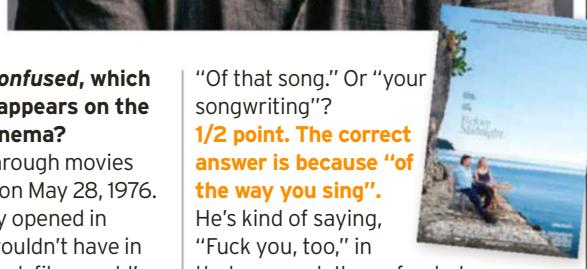
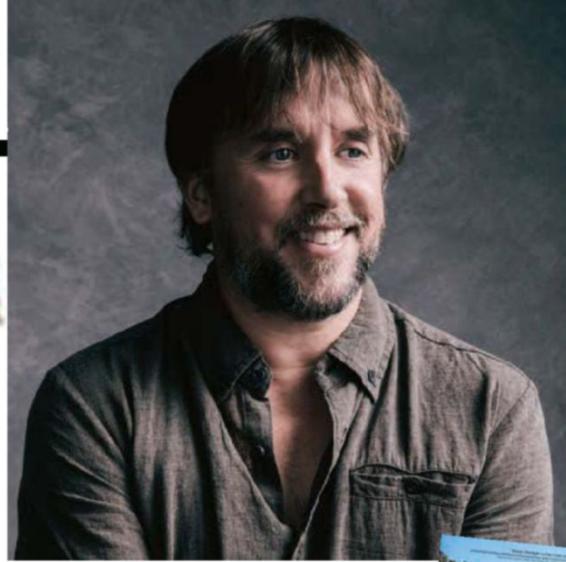
Correct.

3 Who plays the Band Leader in *Me And Orson Welles*?

Jools Holland!
God, I love him.

I'd been over in the UK and someone suggested that Jools has a lot of affection for this era of music [the '30s]. I remember going over to his place, and we'd sit around listening to Fats Waller songs. It was just gorgeous.

Correct.



4 In *Dazed And Confused*, which Hitchcock film appears on the marquee of a cinema?

Family Plot! I looked through movies that were in a theatre on May 28, 1976. *Taxi Driver* had already opened in certain places, but it wouldn't have in my town. But a Hitchcock film would've.

Correct.

5 What is the make of pinball machine your character plays at the end of *Waking Life*?

That is a Bally Fireball. The same machine as is played in *Dazed*.

Correct (It became Rally Firewall in animation for rights reasons).



6 In *Before Sunrise*, Celine singles out the grave of a young girl. What's the girl's first name and how old was she when she died?

[Thinks] She was very young... Was it Audrey? Oh fuck. That particular grave we manufactured, and I remember picking the name... It's escaping me.

The correct answer is Elisabeth and 13 years old.

Oh yeah, Elisabeth! In Texas, there's this old town, Galveston, and there was a real old graveyard I used to visit as a kid, walking around seeing people who'd died at my age, or younger. That's kind of where it came from.

7 Finish this line from *Before Midnigh*: "I fucked up my life because..."

"Of that song." Or "your songwriting"?

1/2 point. The correct answer is because "of the way you sing".

He's kind of saying, "Fuck you, too," in that moment. It was fun to have a 30-minute canvas to explore a conflict. Because it's not all fight. It's just the way arguments happen. They have a way of coming back.

8 What links *Bad News Bears* to *Jaws*?

My Bad News Bears? [Thinks] To *Jaws*? At this moment I have no idea!

There is a character in both films called Matt Hooper.

Oh yes, Joey Bullock is Hooper. But that wasn't deliberate!

9 David Blackwell played which characters in two of your films?

I could list three. He's the liquor store clerk in *Dazed And Confused*. In *Bernie* he's Bernie's assistant. And he's back at the liquor store in *Boyhood*.

Correct.

10 In *Suburbia*, what are the four things Buff says make for a successful evening?

[Laughs] "Home run. Beer, weed, pizza and... blow job?"

1/2 point. The line is "Smoke, babe, slice, brew. All four bases."

"Fuck, it would be Quentin at the top."

[Laughs] But I'm a little pissed – my *Jaws* one was tough. I pride myself, as I'm sure Quentin does too, on a pretty exacting memory. I think the key is to be writer-director."

BOYHOOD IS OUT ON DVD AND BLU-RAY FEBRUARY 26.

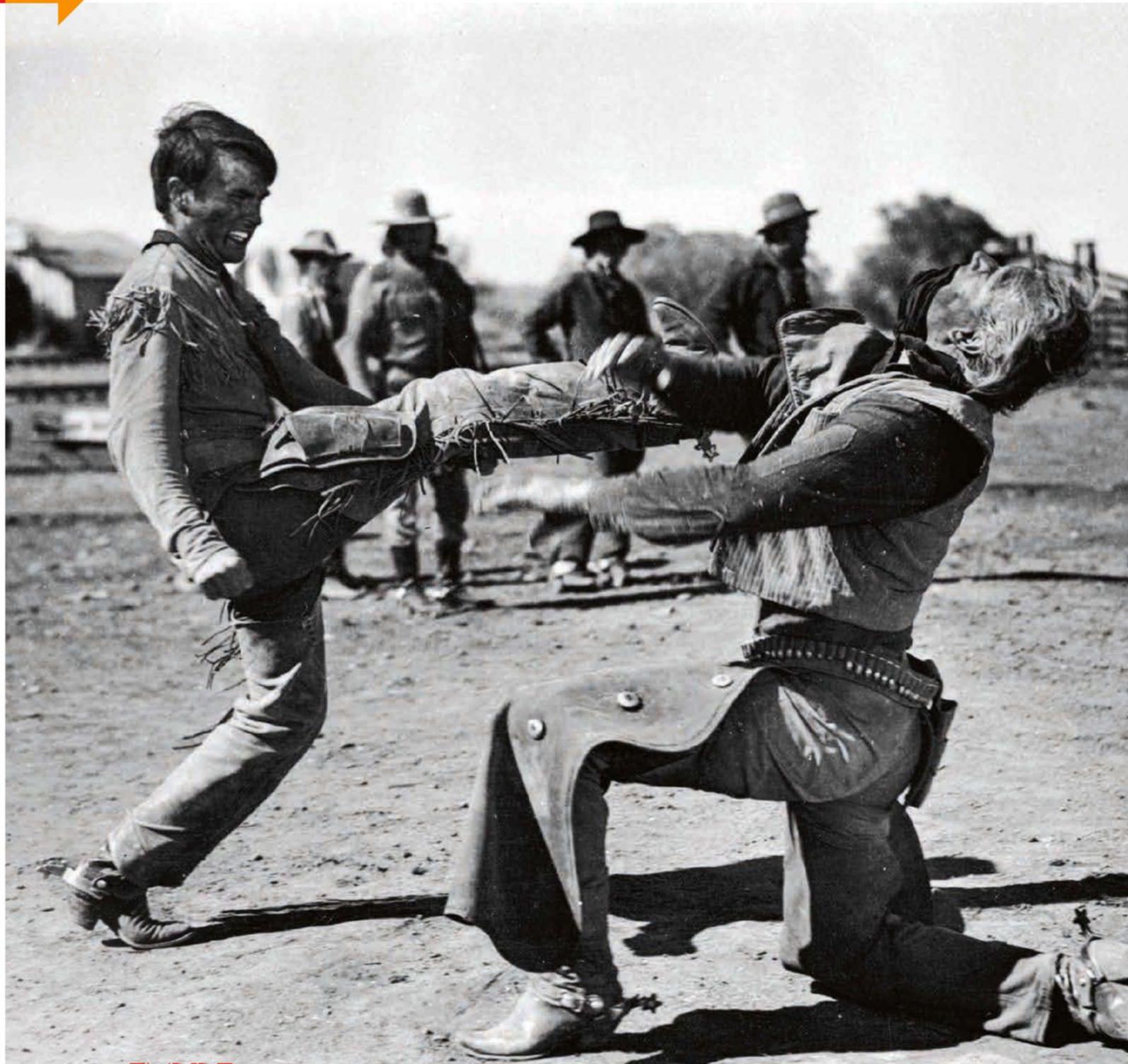
**RICHARD SCORES
7/10**

THE SCOREBOARD

ROBERT RODRIGUEZ, ALEXANDER PAYNE, QUENTIN TARANTINO, SIR CHRISTOPHER LEE, SIR BEN KINGSLEY, DAVID ZUCKER, DAVID O. RUSSELL		9 POINTS
Guillermo del Toro	8.5	
Werner Herzog	8.5	
Christian Slater	8.5	
John Waters	8	
Bryan Singer	8	
Hank Azaria	7.5	
William Friedkin	7.5	
Paul Greengrass	7.5	
Jack Black	7.5	
Frank Darabont	7.5	
Simon Pegg	7.5	
Richard Linklater	7	
Corey Feldman	7	
George A. Romero	7	
David Koop	7	
Roger Corman	7	
Dolph Lundgren	7	
Kevin Smith	7	
Dario Argento	7	
Paul Schrader	6.5	
Andy Serkis	6.5	
Benicio Del Toro	6.5	
John Landis	6.5	
Warwick Davis	6.5	
Shane Meadows	6.5	
Philip Noyce	6.5	
Sigourney Weaver	6.5	
Antonio Banderas	6	
Billy Bob Thornton	6	
Malcolm McDowell	6	
Willem Dafoe	6	
Cameron Crowe	6	
Joe Dante	6	
Baz Luhrmann	6	
Brett Ratner	6	
Brendan Fraser	6	
Dwayne Johnson	6	
Jeff Bridges	6	
Robert Englund	6	
Judd Apatow	6	
Sean Bean	6	
James Cameron	6	
Andy Garcia	5.5	
Danny Trejo	5.5	
Jason Flemyng	5.5	
Bob Hoskins	5.5	
John Malkovich	5.5	
Jean-Claude Van Damme	5.5	
Don Cheadle	5.5	
Jerry Zucker	5.5	
Jim Sheridan	5	
Renny Harlin	5	
John C. McGinley	5	
Judd Apatow	5	
John Leguizamo	5	
Peter Stormare	5	
Edward Zwick	5	
Terry Gilliam	5	
Pete Postlethwaite	5	
Lloyd Kaufman	5	
Joel Silver	5	
Roland Emmerich	4.5	
Billy Connolly	4.5	
Eva Mendes	4.5	
Sam Neil	4	
Christopher Guest	4	
Barry Levinson	4	
John Rhys-Davies	4	
George Miller	4	
Jean Reno	4	
Wes Craven	4	
Joan Allen	4	
Frank Oz	4	
John Hurt	4	
Chris Cooper	4	
John Woo	4	
Heather Graham	4	
Samuel L. Jackson	4	
Ewan McGregor	4	
John Carpenter	3	
Michael Keaton	3	
Steve Guttenberg	3	
Lance Henriksen	3	
Diane Lane	2	

From the archive: *Back To The Future - The Oral History*

PLAY



≡ the **EMPIRE** masterpiece #102 ≡

RED RIVER

The Duke goes dark

1948 / Rated G

WORDS SIMON BRAUND

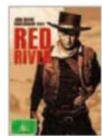
B-R DENOTES ALSO AVAILABLE ON BLU-RAY

3D DENOTES ALSO AVAILABLE ON 3D BLU-RAY

DD DENOTES ALSO AVAILABLE FOR DIGITAL DOWNLOAD

UV DENOTES ALSO AVAILABLE FOR ULTRAVIOLET

Montgomery Clift kicks John Wayne in the face.



FOR ANYONE WHO HAS never credited The Duke as much of an actor – and let's face it, even his most ardent fans would agree he was no Olivier – *Red River* will come as a revelation. “I never knew the big son of a bitch could act!” was John Ford’s comment when he saw the film for the first time. What is also surprising is that Wayne plays a bad guy. And not by any stretch a stock Western bad guy with a black hat and a snarl. Haunted by tragedy, Texas cattle rancher Thomas Dunson is an emotionally wounded man whose deeply flawed character reveals itself under extremes of physical and psychological hardship. In the Wayne canon, only *The Searchers*’ Ethan Edwards rivals Dunson for complexity and inner conflict. It’s significant that the role was first offered to Gary Cooper. He turned it down, worried that it would damage his wholesome image.

Stagecoach, *The Searchers* and *True Grit*. He shows up here in his customary role of rustic savant.

The cast was rounded out by the radiant Joanne Dru (love interest for Clift), the scarcely less radiant Coleen Gray, and Noah Beery Jr., best known for playing Jim Rockford’s dad on *The Rockford Files*.

As an ensemble it could hardly be bettered, and the pairing of seasoned veteran Wayne with newcomer Clift was nothing short of inspired. Off screen, the two were diametric opposites in almost every conceivable respect, from political persuasion to sexual orientation, and the tension off the set undoubtedly spilled over into their performances.

The drive starts off in high spirits with the famous “Yee-haw!” scene (memorably referenced in *City Slickers*), Matt and the trail hands whooping it up as they get the huge herd under way. It’s

The face-off between Wayne and Clift is the crux of the story. Shocking as it is to see Wayne, invariably the embodiment of manly virtue, bent on cold-blooded murder, it’s more shocking still to see him bested by Clift, left wounded and marooned on the prairie, swearing revenge.

The company, now under Matt’s command, head for Abilene. En route, they rescue a wagon train from an Indian attack. It’s here that Matt meets and falls in love with Tess Millay (Dru) who, in an echo of the events that haunt Dunson, he leaves behind in order to beat his stepfather to Abilene.

When the inevitable showdown between Matt and Dunson ensues, it is as bitter and vicious as events have led us to expect, and both Wayne and Clift are in blistering form. Oddly, though, it’s here that *Red River* strikes its only – and only very slightly – off note. The furious fight between Matt and

“One of the most lyrical, beautifully shot Westerns of all time.”

The saga begins when Dunson, facing hard times in Civil War-ravaged Texas, determines to drive his cattle hundreds of miles north to the railhead at Missouri where, he believes, they will sell for a decent price. He is joined in the venture by his adopted son Matt (Montgomery Clift in his film debut), trusty trail hand Nadine Groot (Walter Brennan) and hired gunman Cherry Valance (John Ireland, substitute for a reluctant Cary Grant). Also along for the ride are silent Western star Harry Carey and his son, Harry Carey Jr., whose own lengthy career encompassed many excellent Westerns (*The Searchers*, *She Wore A Yellow Ribbon*, *The Long Riders*, *Tombstone* etc.) and one absolute stinker (1966’s *Billy The Kid Vs Dracula*). No Western of the period, it seems, would have been complete without the wonderful Hank Worden, whose quavering voice and rail-thin frame graced 17 movies with Wayne, among them

interesting to note that Texas Longhorn cattle had been virtually extinct for decades in 1948, and director Howard Hawks had only a couple of dozen to work with. Using them like dress extras, he positioned them carefully to disguise the fact that the bulk of the herd were Herefords.

Conditions on the trail deteriorate rapidly and during a stampede – a legendary, superbly orchestrated sequence that builds to a thundering crescendo – Harry Carey Jr.’s character is killed. As the drive becomes more arduous, Dunson becomes increasingly tyrannical and when he refuses, against all reason, to make for a new railhead in Abilene, much closer than Missouri, dissent begins to fester. Things come to a head when Dunson, his obsession to reach Missouri now bordering on mania, attempts to lynch two hands for desertion. Outright rebellion ensues, with Matt the leader.

Dunson is broken up by Tess who, in a miraculously persuasive moment, forces them to realise the deep love they have for each other. Of course, the conventions of the time demanded just such a reconciliation and contemporary audiences would have been outraged had they been denied it. And in fact, the upbeat ending is only disappointing in context.

In Borden Chase’s original story, Dunson is shot and mortally wounded by Valance in Abilene. Matt and Tess, now betrothed, take him back across the Red River so that he can die on Texan soil. Chase fought hard to keep this ending in the script but was overruled by Hawks.

That the ending is the only controversial aspect of *Red River* says much. It remains one of the most lyrical, beautifully shot and compelling Westerns ever made. It also offers irrefutable evidence that the big son of a bitch could, indeed, act.

For the movie chatter that matters facebook.com/EmpireAust

PLAY GAMES



WORDS STEVE BOXER

2015'S MOST WANTED

Thumbs at the ready!

HALO, UNCHARTED, ZELDA, BATMAN, Tomb Raider: 2015 isn't just a monster year for movie releases. With a procession of iconic franchises returning and brand new ones emerging, here are 15 of the most exciting games to look forward to in the coming months. Preapre the couch for mucho sitting and ask mum for meatloaf.

1 HALO 5: GUARDIANS

Out Spring 2015 / Rated TBC

The Master Chief's triumphant return is shrouded in secrecy, but expect the *Halo* hype-machine to kick into overdrive as 2015 progresses. We do know that sexy A.I. Cortana and *Halo 4*'s Prometheans will return, and anyone who bought The Master Chief Collection will have already sampled the multiplayer beta.



2 TOM CLANCY'S THE DIVISION

Out TBC / Rated TBC

Set in a post-apocalyptic, ravaged New York, this new Clancy outing mixes third-person shooting and role-playing as you take an elite unit on the hunt for a terrorist cell. Following the trend of blurring single and multiplayer game modes, this will see you exchanging ordnance with both AI and flesh and blood opponents.

3 THE WITCHER 3: WILD HUNT

Out May 19 / Rated R18+

Once more placing players in the boots of professional demon-slayer, Geralt of Rivia, the third *Witcher* ups the ante with a gigantic, free-to-roam world and, reportedly, more than 100 hours of adult-themed gameplay.

4 CRACKDOWN

Out TBC / Rated TBC

Industry legend Dave Jones (of *Lemmings* and *Grand Theft Auto* fame) is back on board for this new instalment of the over-the-top sci-fi shooter. This third instalment will feature massively vertical, destructible cities and a stylised, *Blade Runner*-esque look. Guns, cars, superpowers and wholesale destruction – what's not to like?



5 EVOLVE

Out Feb 10 / Rated MA15+

Perhaps the first truly innovative next-gen title, *Evolve* pits four gun-toting players against a single, giant mutating alien – also controlled by a player. An asymmetrical grudge match with monster guns and... well, an actual monster, this looks set to turn the online shooter right on its head.



AVAILABLE ON XBOX 360



AVAILABLE ON XBOX ONE



AVAILABLE ON PLAYSTATION 3



AVAILABLE ON PLAYSTATION 4



AVAILABLE ON WII U



AVAILABLE ON PC



AVAILABLE ON MAC



6 BATMAN: ARKHAM KNIGHT

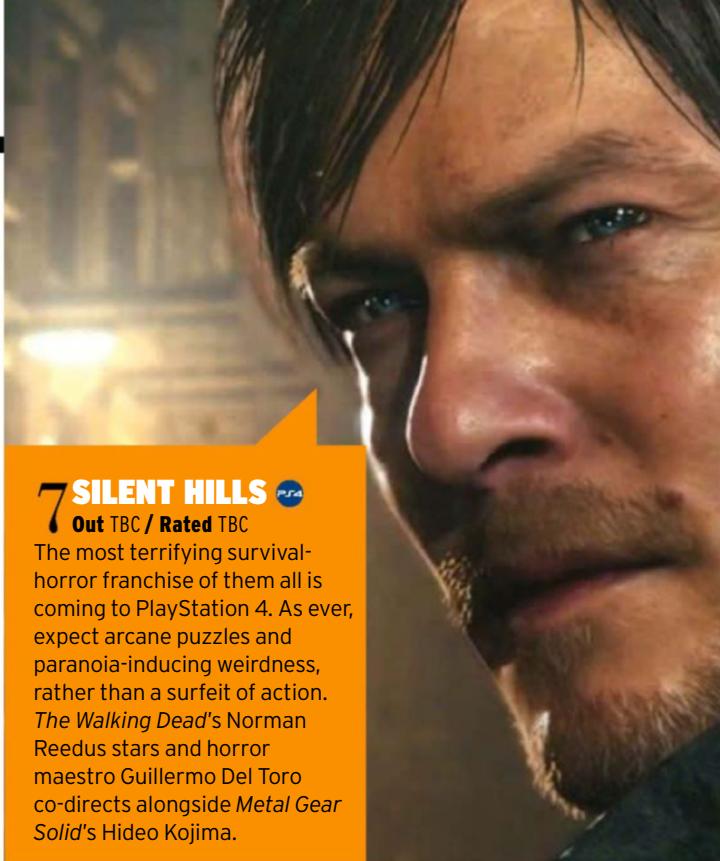
Xbox One

PS4

PC

Out June 3 / Rated TBC

The Dark Knight's first next-gen outing finally breaks out the Batmobile – both as a weapon of mass destruction and a means to launch Batman far into the air for epic glides. Expect brawling gameplay that cranks the whole experience up a notch.



7 SILENT HILLS

Out TBC / Rated TBC

The most terrifying survival-horror franchise of them all is coming to PlayStation 4. As ever, expect arcane puzzles and paranoia-inducing weirdness, rather than a surfeit of action. *The Walking Dead's* Norman Reedus stars and horror maestro Guillermo Del Toro co-directs alongside *Metal Gear Solid's* Hideo Kojima.

8 RISE OF THE TOMB RAIDER

Xbox One

PS4

PC

Out TBC / Rated TBC

Securing the next *Tomb Raider* game as an exclusive is a major coup for Microsoft. Picking up where 2013's reboot left off, with Lara further honing her particular set of skills, this will move away from the last game's island antics, promising a welcome return to the mysterious tombs of yore.

9 BLOODBORNE

Out March 25 / Rated TBC

Another brutally hard action-RPG, but this time set in a grisly, gothic cityscape invaded by demonic forces and shot through with paranoia. Firearms make an appearance but the emphasis is still on carving up your foes with blades. Not as insanely hardcore as *Dark Souls*, but expect much gore.

10 METAL GEAR SOLID V: THE PHANTOM PAIN

Xbox One

PS4

PC

Out TBC / Rated TBC

After the amuse-bouche that was *Metal Gear Solid: Ground Zeroes*, *The Phantom Pain* serves up the main course with a feast of open-world sneak-em-upping, set in Africa and Afghanistan. Kiefer Sutherland stars as the central character.

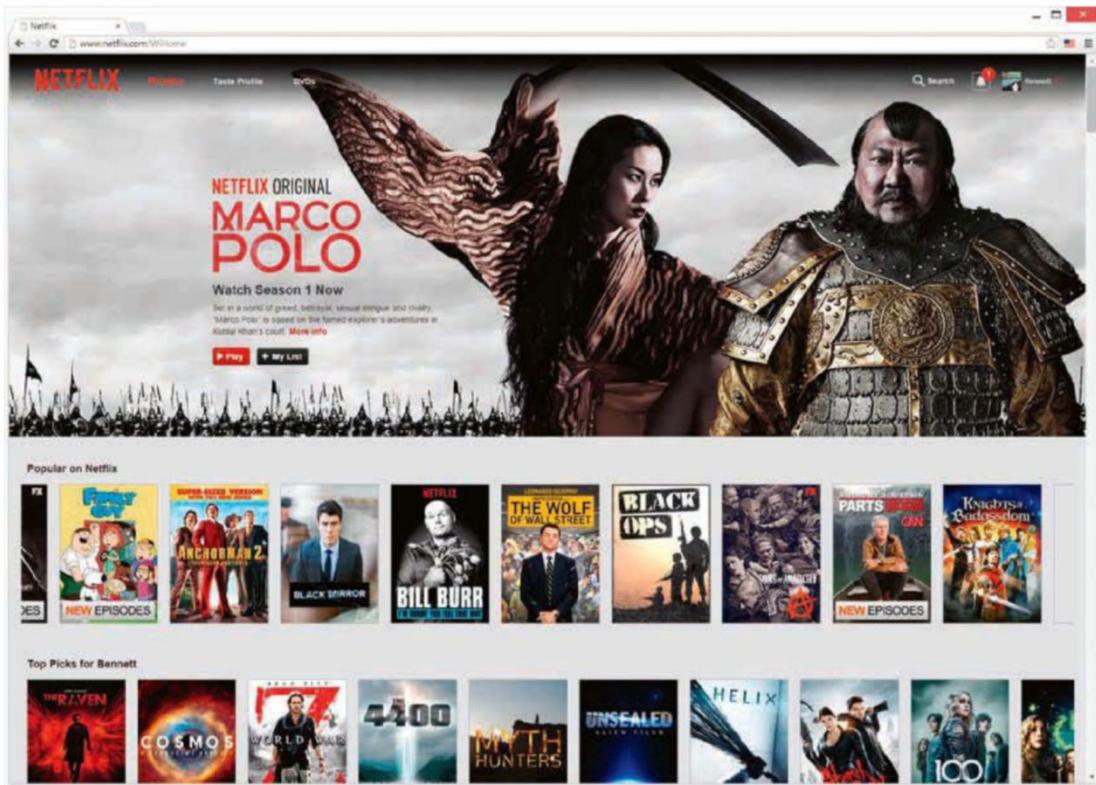
WORDS BENNETT RING

NEW YEAR'S TECH

The preview continues: 2015's must-have bits of kit

WHAT BETTER EXCUSE TO UPGRADE YOUR MOVIE-VIEWING experience than a brand new year? Forget resolutions that you'll never honour – you're not going to make use of that new gym membership past the first month and no, you're not going to stop drinking too much on

those post-work drinks on Friday nights. These New Year Tech-olutions are the perfect promises to self, especially as 2015 is going to be a bumper year for tech-loving *Empire* readers. So, get your credit card ready and make a resolution that you can keep!



ONLINE VIDEO

NETFLIX

THE MOMENT AUSSIES HAVE BEEN waiting so many years for is set to finally arrive (even though we predicted it was due last year.) Netflix has officially announced its launch Down Under in 2015, bringing the best damn online video site to our plasmas, LCDs and projectors. Sure, half of you have been using VPN and geo-unlocking services to use it for the last few years already, but as of 2015 you won't have to lie to get access to Netflix. And that's got to make you feel better, right? Fingers and toes are well and truly

crossed that the local breadth of content matches the amazing mass of media open to Americans, though Australia's unique content licensing laws means we might miss out on a few goodies. Heaven help Netflix if they choose to add the Australia tax to the subscription price, which is less than a tenner for the US service. Expect the launch of Netflix to light a fire under Australia's online video services, such as Quickflix and Bigpond Movies.

DATE March, 2015

PRICE TBD



Are Netflix taking award-winning *House Of Cards* back in-house?

TOP FIVE TECH BUYING TIPS FOR 2015

1 EVEN THOUGH THE resolution jump in 4K screens won't be noticeable to most viewers, they will also include improvements that will make your movies look better than ever. So don't feel so bad about buying a 4K TV.

2 ON THE FLIPSIDE, WE should start to see 4K projectors drop in price, and that will be something worth upgrading to. Hopefully Blu-ray's 4K product should land in the first or second quarter, giving 4K TV and projector owners something to watch.

3 EXPECT DOLBY'S ATMOS technology to show up in more surround sound packages. If you don't want to install the extra speakers in your ceiling required by this format, special speakers that bounce sound off the ceiling will replicate the effect without requiring the use of heavy tools.

4 AUSSIE PIRATES ARE in for special attention thanks to recent legislature passed by the Aussie parliament. Serial offenders can expect legal notices from content owners, especially those in the US, though how ISPs will react is still a bit of a grey area.

5 WE'RE STILL GOING TO get absolutely shafted when it comes to purchasing *Game Of Thrones*, with the license stitched up by Foxtel. Good luck finding a way to view it at similar, sane prices to our international TV-loving cousins.



STREAMING

MEDIA STREAMING BOXES

IF YOU'VE ALREADY GOT A SMARTTV, chances are it'll receive a nice little software upgrade in March, allowing you to partake in the downloadable delights of Netflix, but there are sure to be a few sets that won't. If you're one of these unlucky few, the good news is there are a range of streaming media boxes that you can connect to your TV to access the service. We're fans of Apple's aging Apple TV product, but there's also Google's

new Chromecast dongle, and if you don't mind hitting eBay, the Roku products are pretty tasty too. If you really want to get down and dirty with your tech, the Raspberry Pi mini-computer can be bought for around \$40, and there will undoubtedly be free software ready to bring Netflix rocking into your home theatre, but this is best left to the uber-nerds.

DATE Available now

PRICE Between \$50 and \$200

INTERNET

NBN ROLLOUT

IT MIGHT BE A SHADOW OF ITS FORMER self, with the expensive fibre to the home option being replaced by the much cheaper yet slower fibre to the node option, but at least more Aussies will get access to the NBN. Our government is currently promising 25Mbit/sec download speeds as a baseline, which is about as fast as the existing ADSL2+ technology delivers under extremely rare, perfect conditions. At 25Mbit/sec, running three or four concurrent HD video streams via the 'Net should be possible. The NBN corporation is also promising that 90 per cent of premises with access to the fixed line network will get speeds of 50Mbit/sec. It's a long way off the 100Mbit/sec speed, upgradeable to 1000Mbit/sec, that the original NBN was going to deliver, but it's got to be

better than the ADSL2 services most of us use, which are prone to fluctuating speeds whenever it rains/gets too hot/is just right. Actually, seeing as the "new" NBN is going to be using Australia's rusty copper phone lines as well, we're actually not sure if the new service will be any more reliable. Thanks Tony!

DATE Varies based on suburb

PRICE Varies



CROSS-MEDIA

ANDROID TVs

2014 WAS THE YEAR THAT 4K BECAME THE NORM, AND WE CAN EXPECT THIS trend to continue in 2015, which is kind of annoying considering it's basically pointless in any screen less than 70 or 80 inches across. We'd love to see more OLED TVs make their way to store shelves in this year, but the slow adoption of this superior yet expensive technology means it'll probably remain a niche product for now. What won't be niche is the roll-out of Android-powered TVs, with Sony, Sharp and Philips all jumping on board Google's open OS. This will make cross-media playing and sharing between your TV and your smartphone or tablet about a gazillion times more seamless. It'd be even better if Apple would hurry up and release the Apple Television set it's been rumoured to have been working on for the last however many years.

DATE TBD

PRICE TBD



GIVEAWAYS AND PUZZLERS

EMPIRE CROSSWORD

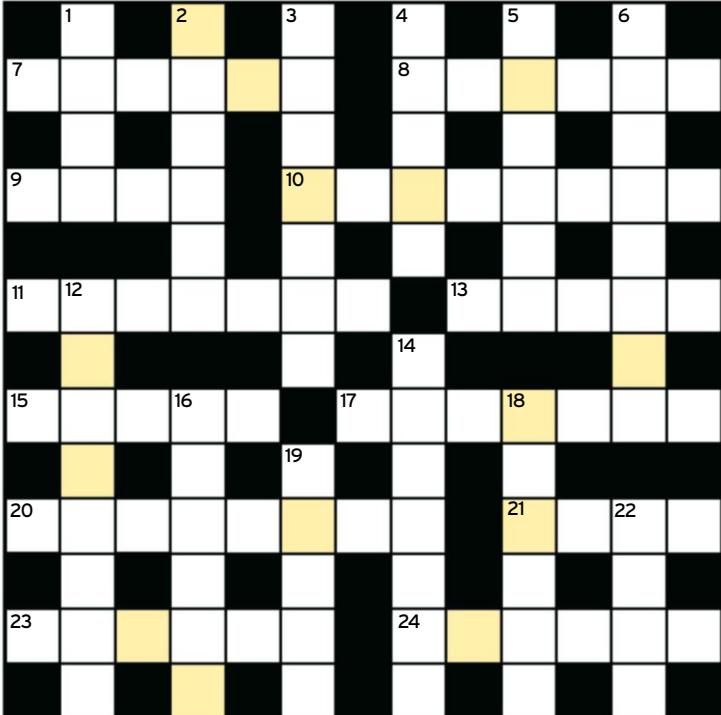
Think you know movies?
Put your skills to the test!

ACROSS

- 7 Hugh, the voice of *Monsters Vs Aliens*' Dr. Cockroach PhD (6)
- 8 David Warner's suitable case for treatment (6)
- 9 Could be Geste, could be Bridges (4)
- 10 Mark, once leader of the Funky Bunch (8)
- 11 He was James Montgomery Falsworth in *Captain America: The First Avenger* (1,1,5)
- 13 *Instinct* or *Attraction* maybe (5)
- 15 *Management* required for Jack Nicholson and Adam Sandler (5)
- 17 Saucer-sized peepers linked with Amy Adams (3,4)
- 20 Singer whose sophomore film was *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* (4,4)
- 21 Douglas, director of *Magnificent Obsession*, *A Time To Love And A Time To Die* etc. (4)
- 23 Butler or possibly Depardieu (6)
- 24 Ally who was once a Brat Pack member (6)

DOWN

- 1 This starred a genuine ham actor (4)
- 2 *House Of Games* star Lindsay, once married to David Mamet (6)
- 3 Ray Winstone played the title role in this 2007 computer-animated fantasy (7)
- 4 Code name of the beach featured in *Saving*



Private Ryan (5)

5 Land linked with Peter O'Toole's Lawrence (6)

6 As played by Naomi Watts and Sean Penn in 2010 (4.4)

12 He made Napoleon dynamite, albeit listless (3.5)

14 In which Albert Finney played the older version of Ewan McGregor (3,4)

16 Walk-on and background players (6)

18 India, Samuel L. Jackson's co-star in

Kite (6)

19 Peter the easy rider (5)

22 sports film directed by David Anspaugh (4)

FEBRUARY ANSWERS: ACROSS: 7 Junior, 8 Exodus, 9 Fury, 10 Vera Cruz, 11 Stealth, 13 Whale, 15 Hitch, 17 Rain Man, 20 John Wick, 21 Bean, 22 Bogart, 23 Robbie. **DOWN:** 1 August, 2 City, 3 Gravity, 4 Jerry, 5 Rob Cohen, 6 Buñuel, 12 A Scandal, 14 Hackers, 16 I, Robot, 18 Arabia, 19 Birth, 21 Babe. **ANAGRAM:** Steve Carell

WIN!

**A RISE PRIZE PACK INCLUDING
BLU-RAY, STUBBIE COOLER, T-SHIRT, CAP AND A SIGNED SCRIPT**

INCARCERATED FOR A CRIME HE DIDN'T COMMIT, A
nurse (Nathan Wilson) must survive maximum security jail and the attention of a hardened crim (Martin Sacks) in this tough-as-nails Aussie drama. The big winner takes home a script signed by writer/director Mack Lindon and stars Sacks and Wilson, plus a bag load of goodies. Nine runners up will win everything except the signed swag and the cooler.

**TO WIN, TELL US WHAT YOUR FAVOURITE
AUSTRALIAN CRIME FLICK IS, AND WHY.**



EMPIRE CAPTION COMP

FILM: *GET HARD* OUT: MARCH 26, 2015

IT'S TRADING PLACES, IN REVERSE, CROSSED WITH BIG Stan! Before you run screaming at that thought, *Get Hard* stars Will Ferrell and Kevin Hart and looks, from the trailer, to be rather funny indeed. And that's what we want you to be, in the form of words, in a line – 10 of them or less, to be exact – to form a brill caption. The best will win this awesome TARDIS onesie and the Doctor Who *Last Christmas* special on BD.



HOW TO ENTER

Tap here to fill in the on-screen form with your 10 words or less caption and hit SUBMIT. The winner will be published in the May 2015 edition of *Empire*.

[You're caption here
0'reader!]

JANUARY 2015 WINNER

"We decided to call this one
Bride Along".

Congratulations Harry Wall! You score a *Guardians Of The Galaxy* prize pack that includes the film on Blu-ray, a cap, backpack and USB.

WIN! *NIGHT MOVES* ON DVD OR BLU-RAY

CRITICS' DARLING KELLY

Reichardt follows Meek's *Cut-Off* with an altogether different affair, as Jesse Eisenberg and Dakota Fanning star as environmentalists on a mission. We have five copies on each format to win.



TO WIN, TELL US WHAT YOUR FAVOURITE JESSE EISENBERG MOVIE IS AND WHY.

WIN! *WOLVES* ON DVD OR BLU-RAY

THE WOLVES IN *WOLVES* ARE werewolves, not swearwolves. There's not a potty-mouthed hound in site, just a pack of shapeshifters who are hungry. Hear them roar by winning one of five discs up for grabs on each format.



TO WIN, TELL US WHAT YOUR FAVOURITE WEREWOLF FILM IS, AND WHY.

WIN! *GAME OF THRONES S4* ON BLU-RAY

WHAT HAPPENS AFTER THE RED wedding? Will Peter Dinklage kill that weasel Joffrey? How big will Daenerys Targaryen's dragons grow? Will a handless Jaime Lannister be, erm... handy? Win one of 10 Blu-rays to find out.



TO WIN, TELL US WHO YOUR FAVOURITE GAME OF THRONES CHARACTER IS, AND WHY.

WIN! *GONE GIRL* ON BLU-RAY

BEN AFFLECK LOVES MAKING films with 'gone' in the title. Want proof? There's *Gone Baby Gone*, *Gone Girl* and... okay, maybe that's it. We have 10 copies on Blu-ray up for grabs of David Fincher's awesome adaptation of Gillian Flynn's bestseller.



TO WIN, TELL US WHAT YOUR FAVOURITE DAVID FINCHER MOVIE IS, AND WHY.

WIN! *BOYHOOD* ON BLU-RAY

IT TOOK RICHARD LINKLATER and his cast, including Ethan Hawke and Patricia Arquette, 12 years to make the award-winning *Boyhood*. You could win a Blu-ray in a minute, depending on how witty and sharp your answer is to the question below.



TO WIN, TELL US WHAT YOUR FAVOURITE COMING-OF-AGE FILM IS, AND WHY.

WIN! *EUROCRIME* ON DVD

ITALY! THE '70S! AN ERA WHEN men were men, moustaches were massive and cops were as dodgy as the crims they were chasing. To see how dirty these Italian Harrys got, win *Eurocrime! The Italian Cop And Gangster Films That Ruled The '70s*.



TO WIN, TELL US WHAT YOUR FAVOURITE ITALIAN FILM IS, AND WHY.

TO WIN ANY OF THESE PRIZES, EMAIL US AT EMPIREGIVEAWAYS@BAUER-MEDIA.COM.AU, WRITE THE PRIZE IN THE SUBJECT LINE, YOUR PREFERRED FORMAT IF THERE ARE both DVD or Blu-ray options and complete the answer in 25 words or less, not forgetting to include your contact details. All competitions are open to both Australian and New Zealander *Empire* readers. Entries close March 9.

For conditions of entry tap here



EMPIRE CLASSIC SCENE

THE MAN WHO WOULD BE KING

(1975) "You may kiss my royal ass."

Rated PG / Director John Huston / Screenwriters John Huston, Gladys Hill / Cast Sean Connery, Michael Caine, Christopher Plummer

SETTING THE SCENE

John Huston's thrilling adventure sees Sean Connery and Michael Caine share the screen for the first of only two times (see also *A Bridge Too Far*). Danny (Connery) and Peachy (Caine) are ex-military chancers wandering colonial Asia. After he appears to survive a direct arrow hit, Danny is given the chance to become a god...

INT. KAFIRISTAN DWELLING – DAY
Danny, Peachy and local interpreter Billy (Saeed Jaffrey) are talking, when they hear Kafiri tribesmen chanting "Sikander" over and over outside.

Peachy: Sikander. Sikander. What does Sikander mean, Billy?
Billy: Sikander a god. Come here long ago from the West.

Danny: That'll be the Greek bloke Brother Kipling told us about.

Peachy: Alexander?

Billy: Alexander. Sikander.

Peachy: Here – Alexander!

Billy: He builded great city. Sikandergul, high in mountains. Sit on throne. All peoples worship him. Then one day, time comes, he say he must go to East. People pull their hairs out, tear clothes. So Sikander promised to send back son.

Peachy: 328 BC. Encyclopedia said.

Billy: Soldiers saw arrow go into Danny's chest, him pluck it out, and not bleeding.

Peachy: So?

Billy: [Pointing to Danny] So, son of Sikander.

Danny: They think I'm a god? [Danny and Peachy laugh.]

Peachy: A god! Put your foot out that I may kiss your big toe.

Danny: You may kiss my royal arse.

Peachy: Not royal – holy! You're a deity, remember?

Billy: Peachy?

Peachy: Yes, Billy?

Billy: Is Danny not son of Sikander?

Peachy: No, Billy, he's a man like you and me. He can break wind at both ends, simultaneous, which I'm willing to bet is more than any god can do.

Billy: But the arrow...

Danny: The arrow stuck in the bandolier. There was no miracle, Billy. So you better tell them that, out there. And my dad's name was Herbert Dravot Esquire, and he was bar steward in a knocking shop in Durham!

Peachy: Hang on a minute, Danny. Maybe we're missing a bet here.

Danny: What do you mean?

Peachy: Supposing you was an ignorant Kafiri... who would you rather follow, a god or a man? Now, we're here to conquer this country, ain't we? Well, with you as a god, it would take half the time and half the trouble.

Danny: The idea is a bit blasphemous, like.

Peachy: No, Danny. Blaspheming is when you take His name in vain. God Almighty's.

Danny: And what if they found out we was having them on?

Peachy: Why should they? We won't tell them. And you won't tell them, will you, Billy?

Billy: Oh, no. Indeed, by Jove, no.

A horn blows outside.

Danny: Polo.

Peachy: Polo...

THE NEXT ISSUE OF EMPIRE IS ON SALE MARCH 9

EMPIRE

May the force be with you always...



Download each issue for your iPhone or iPad from the App store. Search for EmpireAustralasia



ON YOUR
PHONE
AND TABLET

Download at the app store



IN YOUR
MAILBOX

magshop.com.au/Empire



WWW.

ONLINE

empireonline.com.au

Go here to
subscribe to
our newsletter



ON
FACEBOOK

facebook.com/empireaust



ON
TWITTER

twitter.com/empireaust



ON
YOUTUBE

youtube.com/empireaust



ON
INSTAGRAM

instagram.com/empireaust



FRANCES O'CONNOR

JAMES NESBITT

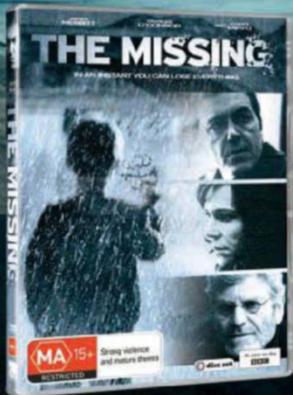


"A MASTERPIECE OF
AGONY TO RIVAL
BROADCHURCH"

— THE TIMES

IN AN INSTANT YOU CAN LOSE EVERYTHING

THE MISSING



OWN IT ON DIGITAL HD NOW.
ON DVD 18 FEBRUARY.

© 2014 NEW PICTURES LIMITED/COMPANY TELEVISION LIMITED. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.

facebook.com/eOneANZ

